SUPER Summer Issue! ★ 4 Great Posters You'll Love

July/August 2009

American Girl

americangirlmagazine.com



35 ways to cool off and get wet!

* Make frozen treats
* 3 quizzes you can take
* Fun fruity crafts

Bonus!
4 funny bookmarks inside!

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10% post-consumer waste

Volume 17, Number 4

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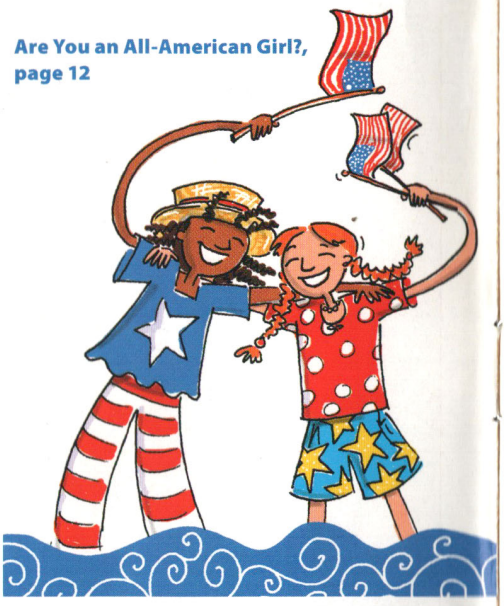
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Win an American Girl star sweatshirt and *A Smart Girl's Guide to Staying Home Alone.* To enter, send a postcard by August 17, 2009, with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—J/A 2009
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

Official Rules

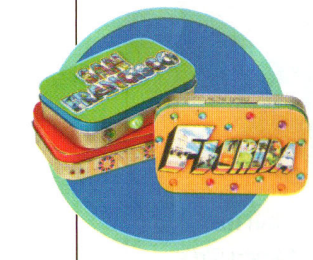
1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by August 17, 2009. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed.
A parent or guardian must sign the entry.
4. One winner will be chosen at random.
5. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
6. Void where prohibited by law.

Cover photo: Jose Martinez

Girls EXPRESS

Pocket Vacation

Turn a candy tin into a travel "destination."

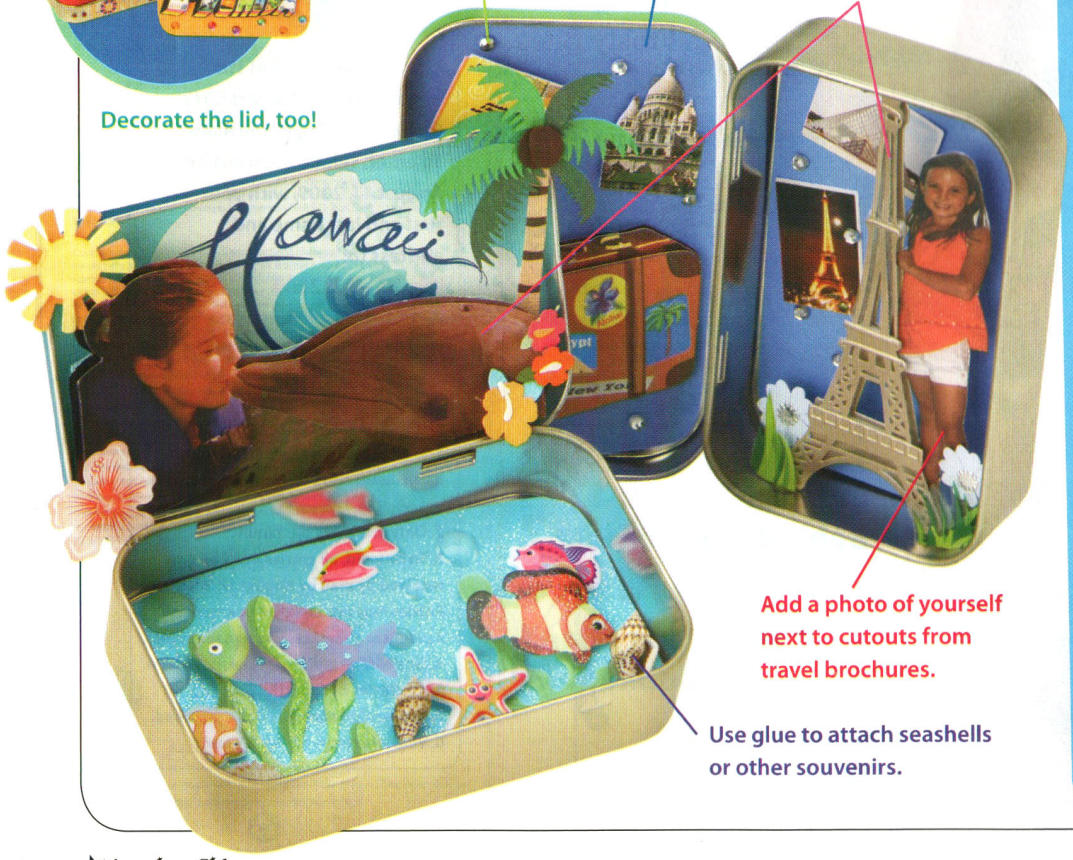


Decorate the lid, too!

For a fun background, tape colored paper to the tin.

Scrapbooking cutouts and rhinestones add sparkle to the scene.

Use adhesive foam pieces to make a cutout 3-D. Put foam between two copies of the same photo for a fun effect.



Add a photo of yourself next to cutouts from travel brochures.

Use glue to attach seashells or other souvenirs.

Meet an AG Reader



Amy S.
Age 12, Massachusetts

I live with my mom, dad, and older brother. We have a dog named Cleo, a cat named Milo, and a hamster named Charley Bear.

In my free time, you can find me playing basketball or going horseback riding. I also love to read books, and I volunteer at the local animal shelter.

My favorite snack: I like cream cheese and green olives on crackers. Yum!

One thing most people would never guess about me: If you opened up my desk drawer, you'd find a stack of stories that I've started writing but never finished.

A time I wanted to disappear: Once I slipped and fell on a patch of ice while walking into school. How embarrassing is that?

My favorite part of AG is any story about girls who raise money to help animals. It's amazing to know how many people want to help out.

Introduce Yourself!

To find out how to be a featured reader, go to americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Start the fun."

Illustrations: Tracey Wood

Shining Star

When Emily L. runs, she feels free. But in other parts of the world, running can give girls *actual* freedom. Emily learned about girls in Ethiopia (a country in Africa) who joined running programs that allowed them to attend school and have better lives. When Emily found out that some girls couldn't run—or go to school—because they didn't have running shoes, she sprinted into action, collecting gently used shoes to donate to girls in need.

"I made posters and decorated collection boxes," says Emily, who also spoke to community groups about her cause. In all, Emily collected more than 200 pairs of shoes. The 10-year-old Virginia girl and her family then piled the shoes in the car and delivered them to an organization that would clean and ship the shoes to Africa.

"I'll keep on collecting shoes," says Emily, "so that more girls in Ethiopia can experience the freedom of running."

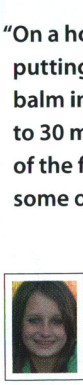


You can shine, too. Plenty of girls in this country don't have good shoes. Organize your own mini shoe drive, and deliver the shoes to a charity that gives away clothing locally.

Lip Trick

Try Alyssa's idea for a cool treat on a hot day.

"On a hot summer day, try putting your favorite lip balm in the freezer for 20 to 30 minutes. Take it out of the freezer, and put some on your lips. Ahhh."



Alyssa W.
Age 14, Michigan



Readers' Best Parties

Who: All AG readers

What: Your ideas for fabulous parties that you've had or would love to have. We want your best themes, invitations, games, favors, food, and other party fun—the more clever and creative, the better.

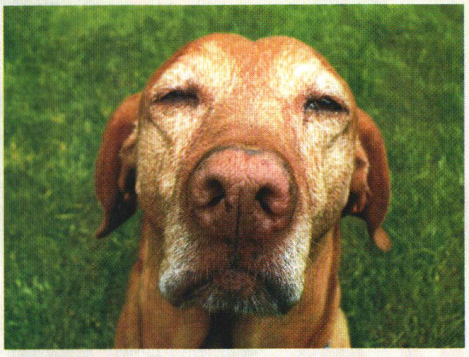
Why: We want to show reader-inspired parties in an upcoming issue. Your idea could be featured!

Where: Send letters to the address on page 7.

When: Deadline is August 10, 2009.

Picture Perfect

Try our photo tips—on vacation or around home.



Keep It Simple

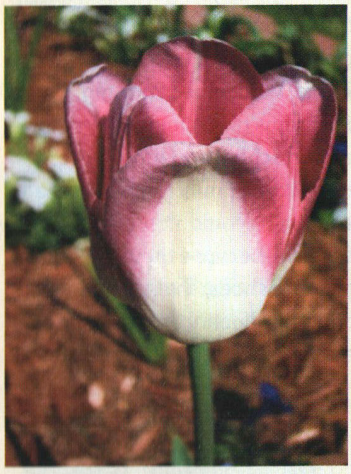
Make your subject the star of the shot by keeping the background as plain as possible.



Olivia B.
Age 11, Washington

Keep It Close

Don't try to squeeze too much into one photo. Sometimes it's best to move in for a close-up. Don't get too close, though—stand several steps away from your photo subject.





Joyce W.
Age 12, New Hampshire

Keep It Natural

People in your pictures don't always have to be looking at the camera. Try taking a photo when someone doesn't expect it.



Sarah B.
Age 11, Maryland



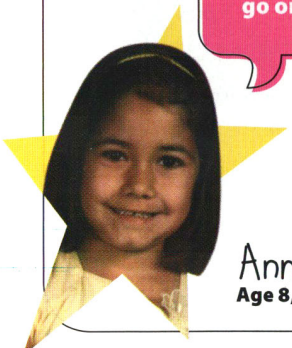
Share your super shots! Send your **best photos** to the address on page 7.

Laffateria

Make us laugh! Send your best joke to the address on page 7.

Where did the sheep go on vacation?

The Baaahamas



Anna S.
Age 8, Florida

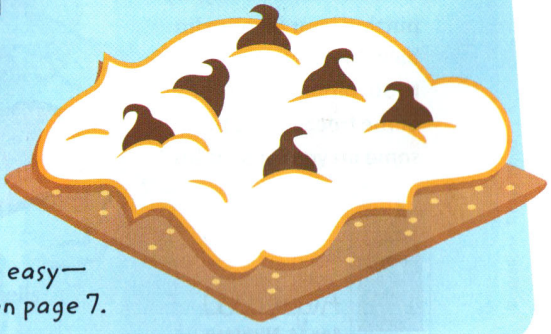
Reader Recipe



Lea O.
Age 12, Pennsylvania

Lea's Almost S'mores

Spread **marshmallow creme** onto a **graham cracker,** and then add **chocolate chips.** Done! You also can sprinkle on different fun toppings such as **jimmies, crushed cookies,** or **colorful chocolate candies.**



Send your yummy—and easy—recipes to the address on page 7.

Summer Styles

Keep your cool with these simple 'dos.

Twin Twists



1. Pull hair into two low ponytails near your ears, and tie them off with elastics.
2. Twist one tail until it folds on itself. Then wrap the end of the twist a few times around the elastic.
3. Wrap a second elastic over the first elastic to secure the twist.
4. Repeat with the other ponytail.

Woven Pony



1. Pull hair into a low side ponytail, leaving a 1-inch strand of hair underneath the tail, outside the elastic.
2. Braid the loose strand. Then wrap the braid around the elastic two or three times.
3. Tuck the rest of the braided strand into the elastic under the ponytail. Pull ends through.
4. Finish with a few tiny braids here and there, tying off with small elastics.

Photos: Radlund Photography

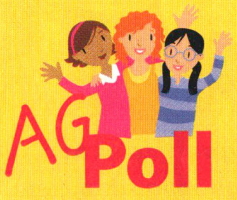
Creative Corner

Ribbon Headband



Photo: Radlund Photography

Cut out card. Flip over for directions.



Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.

How are you keeping in touch with friends over the summer?

- text message
- e-mail
- phone
- IM

Where would you go on your dream vacation?

- a theme park
- Hawaii
- a horse ranch
- Paris

Ribbon Headband

1. Cut a 1-foot piece of ⅝-inch-wide grosgrain ribbon.
2. Cut a 3-foot piece of ⅜-inch-wide grosgrain ribbon.
3. Lay the thinner ribbon on top of the wider ribbon. Attach with Glue Dots. Press firmly.

To wear, lay the headband across your hair, then tie the two ends in a bow at the nape of your neck.

AG Poll



What girls told us at americangirlmagazine.com:

To keep in touch with friends, girls prefer:

56% phone	**27%** e-mail
11% text message	**6%** IM



For a dream vacation, girls would go to:

38% Hawaii	**24%** Paris
21% theme park	**17%** horse ranch

To answer our weekly poll question, go to americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Fun for Girls."

AG Art Gallery

Feel the tropical breezes!



Sarah K.
Age 11, Massachusetts



Help us fill our gallery! Send color copies of your **original artwork** or photos to the address on page 7. Sorry, we can't return entries.







Alexis O.
Age 9, Colorado





Shelby R.
Age 12, Wisconsin



Claire D.
Age 11, California

True Story

Megan gets to bring her dog with her to summer camp!

Dear American Girl,

When I pack for camp this summer, I'll grab more than my shorts, swimsuit, and sneakers. I'll also bring dog food and a leash. That's because my dog, Penny, will be coming with me!

At a camp for kids and their dogs, Penny and I explore the countryside and learn dog-friendly sports. With other campers and our expert leaders, we hike through woods, splash in the creek, and eat hot dogs by the campfire—Penny's favorite.

Last year, Penny and I learned about tracking. This skill involves teaching a dog to follow a scent to find a person or object. During practices, I'd hide and Penny would sniff and run until she found me.

Taking Penny with me to camp is fun, but it's also a great learning experience. Plus, I get to meet friends who love their own dogs as much as I love Penny.

Sincerely,
Megan A.
Age 13, South Carolina



Tell us about **something amazing** that happened to you! Write to the address below.



Megan loves working with Penny and teaching her new tricks.

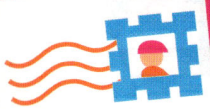


Good dog!

Short & Sweet

Make someone's day with a small act of kindness.

Everyone loves to get mail—including your grandparents. Get seven postcards or note cards, and write one short note to a grandparent every day for a week. Tell him or her what you did that day, or share a funny little story that will bring a smile.



Send us your ideas for little acts that get big thanks. Write to the address at right.

Write to Us!

Be sure to include your...

- **first and last name**
- **address and phone number**
- **birth date, including year**
- **school photo or snapshot**

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon!





Envelope art by
Ashlyn C.
Age 8, California

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

Sweet Feet

Nearly 2,000 girls sent us splashy, summery, and silly sandals. Here are the ones we really flipped for.

Flower Power





Faith J.
Age 7, California

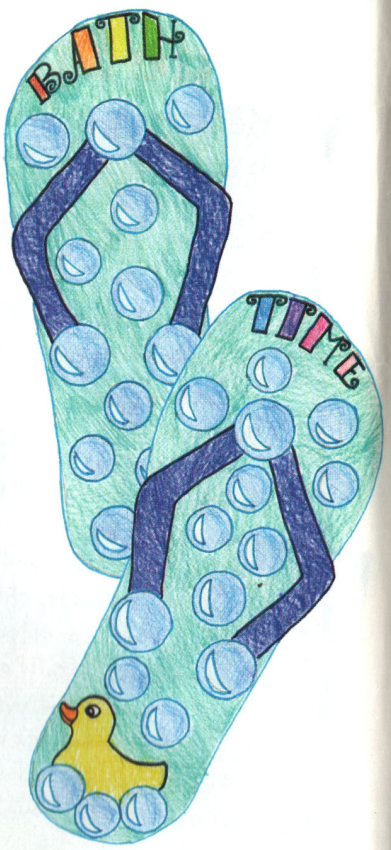
Delicious Desserts





Lindsey F.
Age 11, New Hampshire

Feeling Bubbly





Sophie M.
Age 11, Virginia

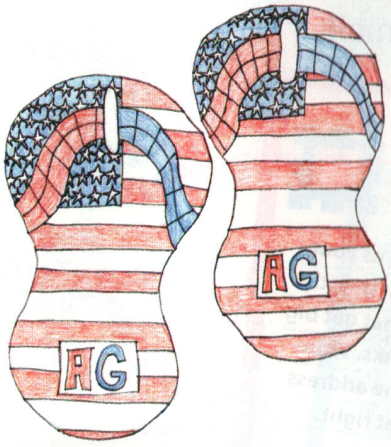
Peace Out





Sarah W.
Age 11, Florida

Stars and Stripes





Mikayla K.
Age 10, Virginia

Puppy Love





Kacee G.
Age 12, Washington

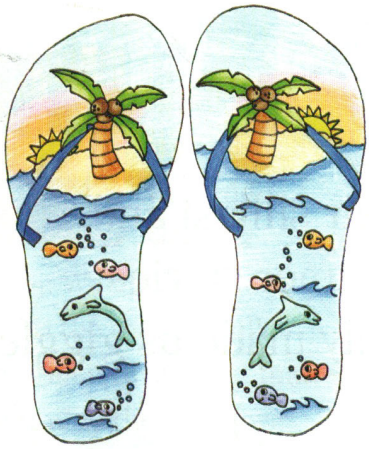
Easy Being Green





Tierney T.
Age 13, Texas

Beachy Keen





Christina P.
Age 11, Wisconsin

Queen Bee





Carly D.
Age 11, Maryland

Reel Cute





Morgan T.
Age 13, Indiana

Pretty Patches





Jenna W.
Age 12, South Dakota

Under the Sea





Kira L.
Age 10, California

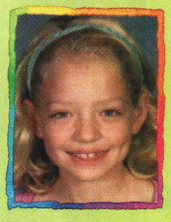
New Contest: Send American Girl a Valentine

Show *American Girl* magazine some love and send us a card for Valentine's Day! Make a valentine that we've never seen before—sew it, paint it, or decorate it with sparkles and sweet words—but please don't decorate your card with candy. Send your valentine to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, and birth date. Postmark deadline: August 10, 2009. Winners will appear in the January/February 2010 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.

Sunny Funnies

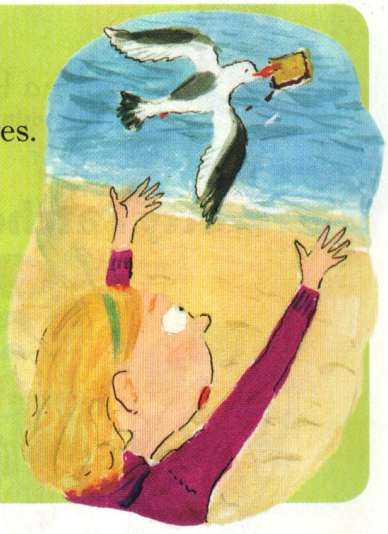
Lots of girls sent us their silliest and most embarrassing summer stories. Here are a few that really made us giggle.





My family and I were at the beach making s'mores. My dad gave me one—but then a seagull flew over and ate it right out of my hand! Now when I have food on the beach, I steer clear of seagulls.

Kate M.
Age 8, Indiana





One summer day, I was hanging out at my friend's house and my friend's mom put a bag of crabs she had bought on the dining table. We were sitting at the table when suddenly the crabs started scurrying out of the bag! Everyone screamed. The crabs were crawling all over the table and floor. Eventually my friend's dad caught them, and we had a big laugh afterward.

Amber M.
Age 10, Connecticut





On craft day at camp, I was using lots of glue to make a craft. When I showed a counselor my craft, he said, "It's really good, but you have a huge clump of glue on your forehead." All of the kids burst out laughing. I was so embarrassed.

Mickena B.
Age 11, California



I was at the lake and I saw a cool fish swimming in the water. I leaned over to look at it, and before I knew it, I was soaked from head to toe! My family laughed at me. I have to admit that if I saw myself fall in the water, I would laugh, too!

Katie C.
Age 11, Maryland

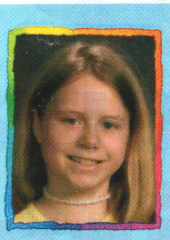


When I was at camp, my friends and I went to what we thought was our cabin. But when we opened the door, 12 boys stared at us! We all screamed and ran back to our own cabin.

Nicole C.
Age 12, Virginia

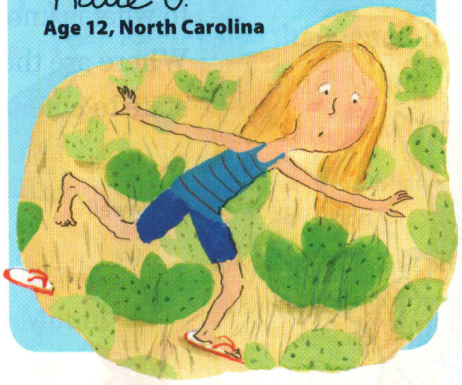
Big Truth

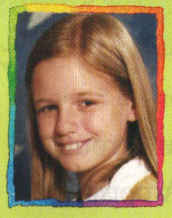
Summer can be a lot of fun—and funny, too!



On vacation, my dad wanted to stop at a beach. We pulled to the side of the road to walk to it. But it turned out that the trail to the beach was covered with prickly cactus plants. Then I lost one of my flip-flops! My dad had to carry me back to our car.

Katie T.
Age 12, North Carolina





My mom and I were sitting on a beach. Suddenly there was a big wave, and tons of sand and water sprayed us. We had to walk back to the house soaking wet with sand in our hair. We looked really funny!

Kei T.
Age 11, New York



One summer, my family and I went for a walk outside. I was walking ahead of them when, all of a sudden, a huge turkey jumped out in front of me! It chased me all the way down a hill. We still laugh about it today.

Ashley R.
Age 13, Ohio

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Bragging. What do you think is the difference between being proud of your accomplishments and bragging? Have you had a friend or sibling who you thought might be a bragger? Is there a way to politely stop someone from bragging? Share your thoughts about bragging with us.

Send answers, name, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 7. Postmark deadline: August 10, 2009. Some answers will appear in the January/February 2010 issue. ★



Illustrations: Laura Cornell

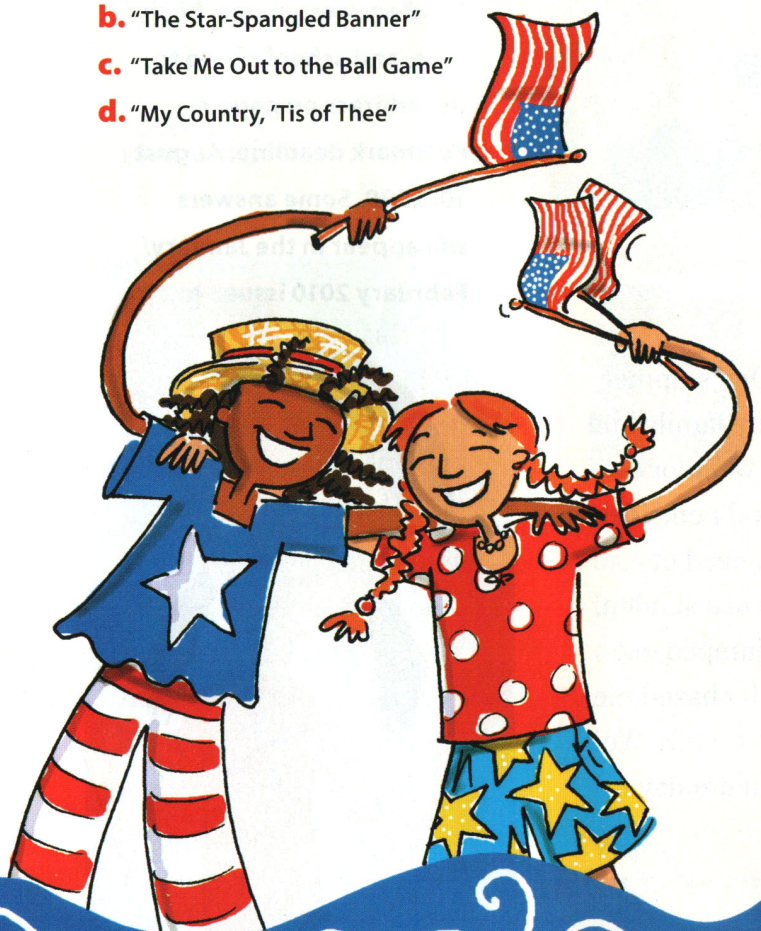
Are You an All-American Girl?

This Fourth of July, take this quiz to see how much you know about the good old U.S.A.!

by Brette Sember

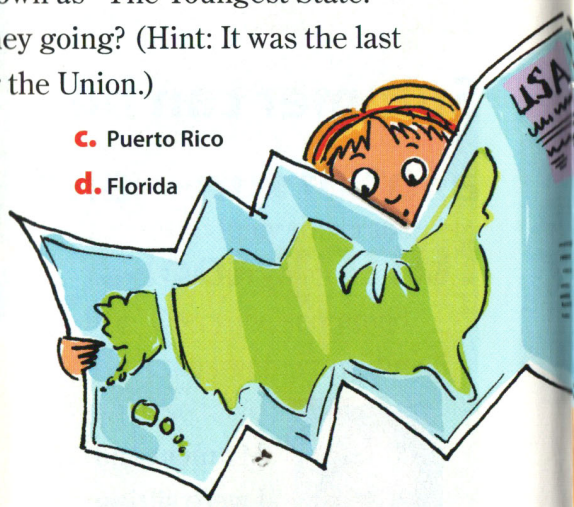
1. It's right before kickoff at your brother's football game. Everyone stands to sing the national anthem. What song is it?

a. "America the Beautiful"
b. "The Star-Spangled Banner"
c. "Take Me Out to the Ball Game"
d. "My Country, 'Tis of Thee"



2. Your mom won the sales award at work, and her company gave her and Dad a trip to what is known as "The Youngest State." Where are they going? (Hint: It was the last state to enter the Union.)

a. Alaska
b. Hawaii
c. Puerto Rico
d. Florida



3. Your mom adores Thai food and your dad loves Italian. But you prefer American fare. Which of these American foods was NOT actually invented in America? (Hint: More than one answer is correct!)

a. ice cream
b. hot dog
c. apple pie
d. French fries
e. pizza
f. bagels



4. Your birthday card from Grandma arrived. She always includes a crisp $10 bill. Whose portrait are you expecting to find on the cash inside?

a. Alexander Hamilton

b. Thomas Jefferson

c. Ronald Reagan

d. George Washington



5. During summer break, your family is driving to South Dakota to see Mount Rushmore. What famous face do you NOT expect to see carved in stone?

a. George Washington

b. John F. Kennedy

c. Thomas Jefferson

d. Theodore Roosevelt



6. Your best friend lives in New York and you live in California. You have to tell her about what happened today, but you don't want to call too late. When it's 9 P.M. in California, what time is it in New York?

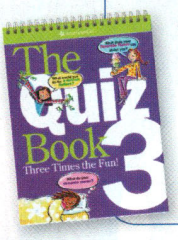
a. 9 P.M. What is this, a trick question?

b. 6 P.M. She's probably just sitting down to dinner.

c. Midnight. You'd better wait until tomorrow to call.

d. 11 P.M. It's two hours later in New York; that's still too late to call.

Answers: 1. b; 2. b; 3. None of them were actually invented in America (a. France, b. Germany, c. England, d. Belgium, e. Italy, f. Germany); 4. a; 5. b (Abraham Lincoln is the fourth face.); 6. c



There are more great quizzes in The Quiz Book 3.

Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer

To Do Today

JULY

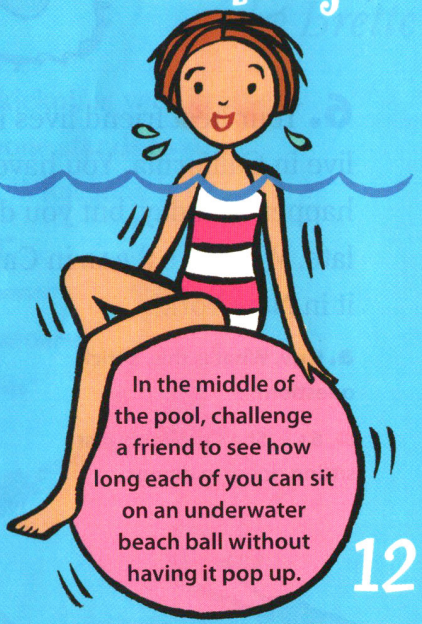


Sunday Monday Tuesday

Shoot "baskets" in the pool. Float an inner tube in the pool. See how many rubber balls you can toss into the tube.



6 7



In the middle of the pool, challenge a friend to see how long each of you can sit on an underwater beach ball without having it pop up.

12

Play limbo with a hose! While someone tightly holds the hose, move your body under the stream of water. If you get hit with the water, you're out. Have the person holding the hose lower it, and see how low you can go!



21



Photo: Edwin van Wier/Shutterstock

19

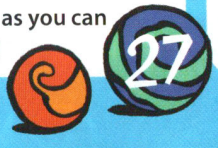
Rinse your hair with cool water just before you get out of the shower. It'll feel great, and it'll make your hair shinier, too!

20

On a hot day at the pool or beach, take a spray bottle filled with water and ice cubes and spray your towel. Wrap yourself in it and cool off.

26

Toss marbles into a large plastic tub filled with water. With a few friends, sit in lawn chairs around the tub with your feet in the water. Using only your feet, pick up as many marbles as you can in one minute!



27

Play Duck, Duck, Goose in the yard, but have everyone say "Splish, Splish, Splash" instead. Use a wet sponge and splash the "goose" by squeezing the sponge.



28

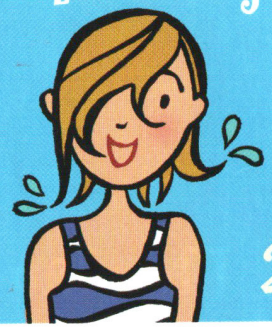
Safety first!
When swimming or doing pool activities, always make sure there is an adult or lifeguard present.

Have a SUPER-COOL summer with these GET-WET activities.

Wednesday

Ask a friend to hold a bucket of water, and stand far apart from her. Try to toss wet sponges into the bucket. You get 5 tries, and then you'll switch. See who can get the sponges into the bucket the most times! 1

Thursday



2

Friday

Fill several water balloons. Use a plastic bat and have someone pitch a water balloon to you. When you hit it, the balloon will burst! Be sure to pick up the balloon pieces when finished. 3

Saturday





Photo: Paco Romero/iStockphoto

8

Have a "weird hair" contest with pals at the pool. You'll each duck underwater quickly. When you come up, the one with the wackiest-looking hair wins. Take turns being the judges. 9



10

July is **Family Reunion Month.** Today, gather up your family members and have a big water-balloon toss in the backyard. It's sure to make you all laugh—and cool off, too! Afterward, pick up the balloon pieces. 11

To prevent tangles when you swim, work your hair into two braided pigtails. Or put your hair up into a bun and wear a cute, colorful swim cap. 15



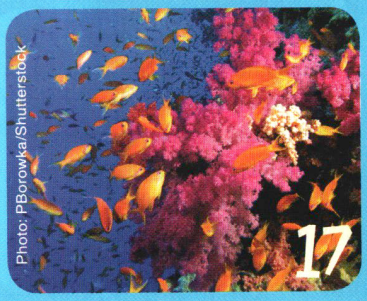


Photo: PBorowka/Shutterstock

17

Go to the pool and make up a silly synchronized swimming routine with friends. Bring a music player and do your routine to a funny song. Have a parent videotape it. 18

Purchase a disposable waterproof camera, and take photos of your friends in a pool.



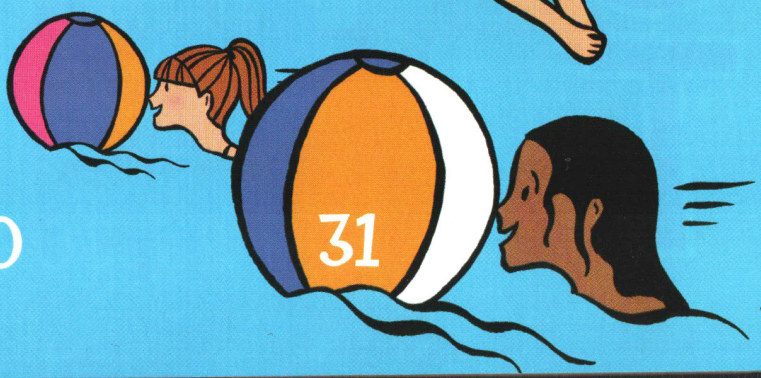
29

Play this game of charades in the pool. Take turns pretending to be a different sea creature, such as a whale, octopus, or seal. See if your friends can guess which animal you are. 23

Today is **"Hot Enough for Ya?" Day.** Cool off by playing volleyball—and put a sprinkler right under the net. You and your friends will get soaked! 24



Have a "dolphin relay" at the pool. Divide into teams. You'll take turns going as fast as you can across the pool and back, pushing beach balls with your noses. The first team to finish wins. 30



31

Illustrations: Mary Lynn Blasutta

To Do Today

AUGUST

Sunday

Create a backyard water park. Set up an inflatable pool, buckets, and a sprinkler. Fill the buckets with water toys and water balloons. Let the splashy fun begin!

2

Monday

Make a giant ice cube! Fill a cardboard juice carton with water and freeze overnight. The next day, peel off the cardboard, then rub it with your hands or feet to cool off.

3

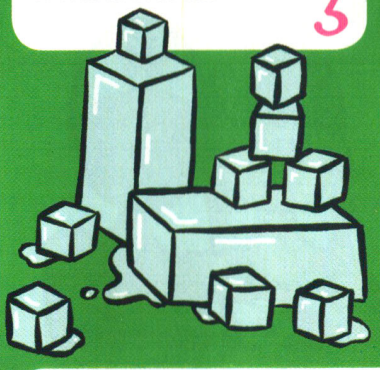
Tuesday



4

Give your drink a tart twist. Pour water and ice into a pitcher, and add lemon and lime slices (ask an adult for help). Leave in the fridge for 20 minutes.

11



Play Cold Potato. Get an ice cube and form a circle with friends. Pass the ice cube around as fast as you can until it melts. The last person holding the ice cube before it melts is the winner.

9



Play a wet game of hide-and-seek. The girl who is It carries a spray bottle. When she finds someone, she gets to spray that person!

16

Have a couple of friends twirl a jump rope, and see how long you can jump without spilling a cup of water in your hands.



18



Photo: Anneije/Shutterstock

23/30

Play a soggy game of bowling. Set up a row of empty water bottles. Roll a foam ball soaked in water toward the bottles and see how many you can make fall over.

24/31



25



Saturday

Have a stylish, soggy swimsuit fashion show. Set up a sprinkler, and have friends walk through it wearing fun swimsuits, hilarious hats, and big sunglasses.

1



8

It's **Relaxation Day.** Chill out and make a refreshing foot soak. Fill a large plastic tub with cool water and crushed mint leaves (you can find them at a grocery store).

15

Wednesday



5

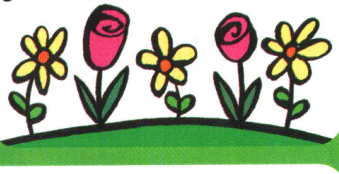
Thursday

Play with a hula hoop under a sprinkler. Twirling a slippery hula hoop will be extra tough to do!

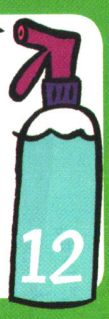
6

Friday

Help your mom or dad water the garden today. When you're finished, soak yourself with the garden hose to cool off.



Put a spray bottle filled with water in the fridge, and spritz yourself before going outside on a hot day.



12

With friends, throw wet sponges into 3 buckets of water, set far apart. The closest bucket earns you 1 point, the second gets 2 points, and the third earns 3 points. Whoever has the most points after 3 turns wins.



14

Ask your mom or dad if you can help wash the car today.



19

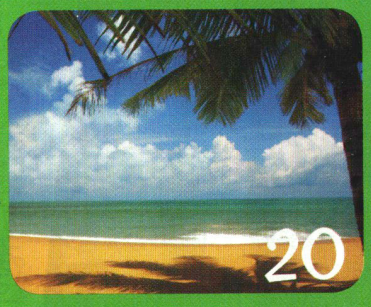


Photo: Dmitry Ersler/iStockphoto

20

Have a friend sit facing away from you, wearing her swimsuit. Use a wet sponge to write a letter of the alphabet on her back. Have her guess the letter. Then trade places.

21

Here's a way to get your hair to have pretty, beachy waves. Fill a spray bottle with water. As you spray your dry hair, scrunch sections of it to make it wavy.

22

Put a few ice cubes in your dog's water dish today. Dogs need to cool off, too!



26

Photo: Megan Lorenz/iStockphoto

Play a wet-clothes relay. Divide old clothes into 2 buckets of water. Make 2 teams of at least 3 girls each. Put on the clothes in your bucket as fast as you can—then remove them and let the next girl on your team go. The first team to finish wins. ★

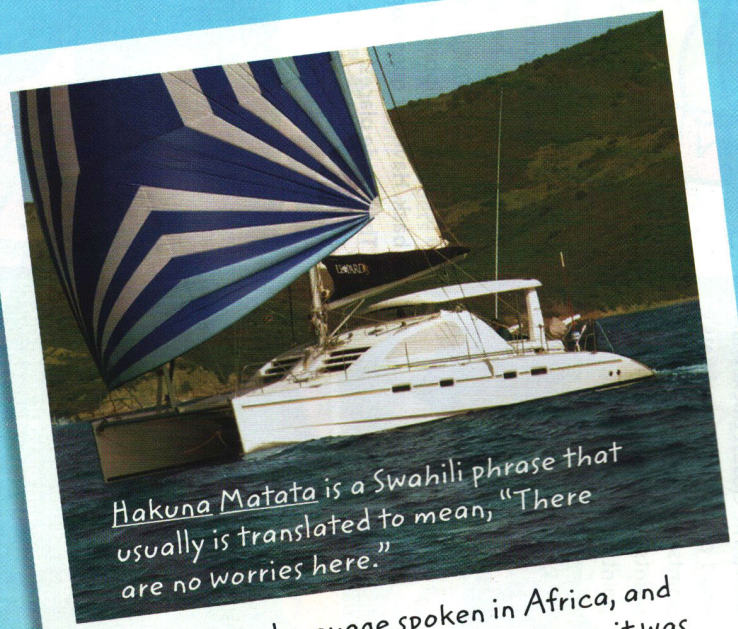
27



29

Elena Around the World

Imagine that you lived on a boat for a whole year. Elena has done it, and she'll tell you what it's really like.

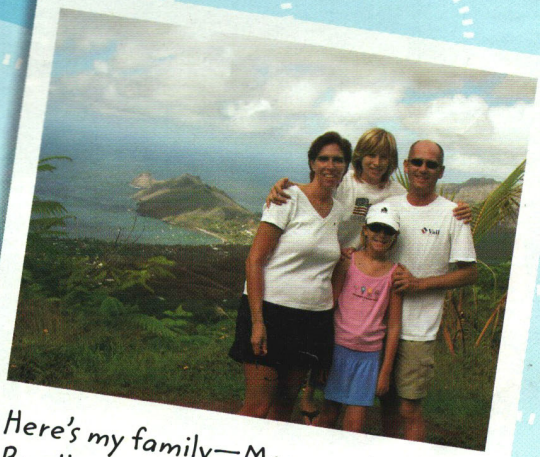


Hakuna Matata is a Swahili phrase that usually is translated to mean, "There are no worries here."

Swahili is a language spoken in Africa, and the boat was built in South Africa, so it was a perfect name!

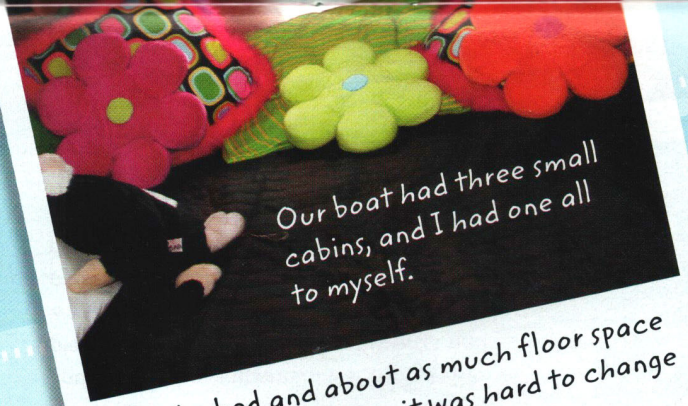
I've lived a lot of places. I was born in Venezuela, and my family and I had lived in Brazil and the United States before we moved to Mexico. So when my parents told my brother, Bradley, and me about their idea for taking a year off to sail around the world in a boat, I wasn't nervous. I was really excited. Of course, it would be hard to leave behind my friends, my school, our house, and our pets, who would be going to stay with some friends while we were away. But I could hardly wait to see what adventures lay ahead.

We took sailing lessons and got ready for life on the boat, including packing up our house. We said good-bye to our friends and flew from Mexico City to France, where we moved aboard our boat and settled into our new space. Our boat, *Hakuna Matata*, was a 43-foot *catamaran*, which is a boat propelled by sails or a motor. (Say it like this: KAT-uh-muh-ran.) I put up photos in my cabin of our cat and dogs, and we set out, visiting beautiful places in the Mediterranean before crossing the Atlantic to continue exploring.



Here's my family—Mom, my brother, Bradley, me, and Dad.



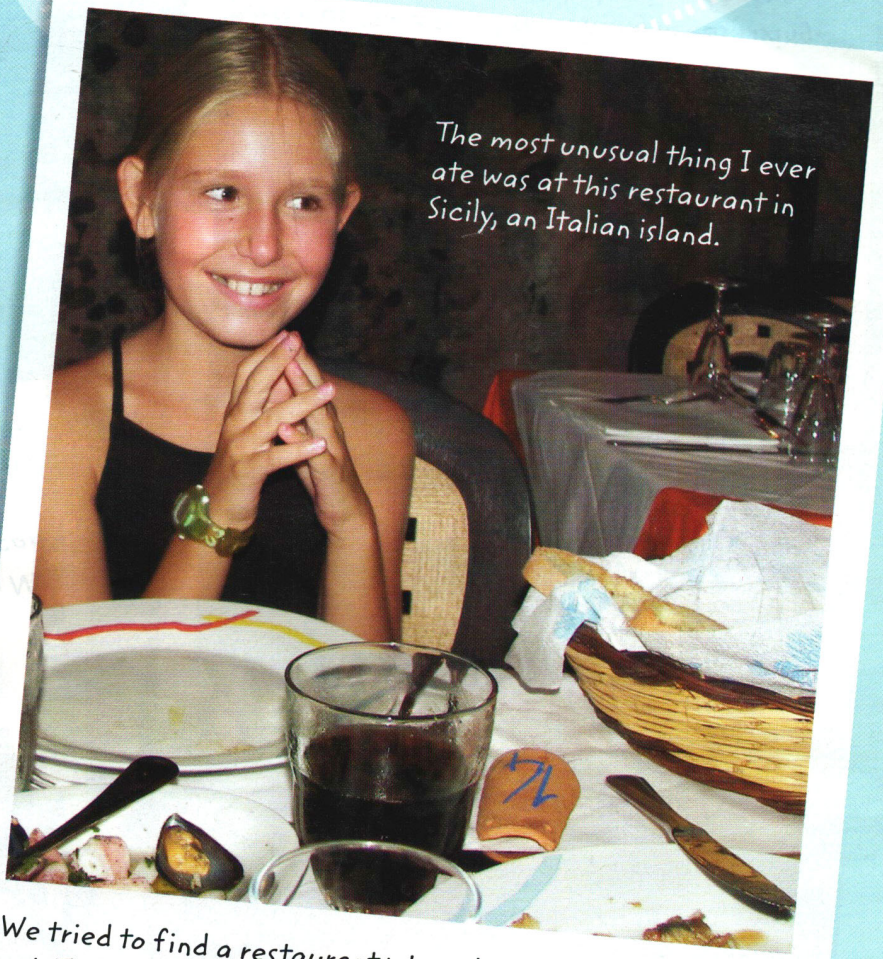


Our boat had three small cabins, and I had one all to myself.

I had a bed and about as much floor space as in a phone booth—it was hard to change clothes when the seas were rough.



This beach is at Stromboli, a Mediterranean island that is home to a large active volcano. The beach is black because it's formed from lava rocks.

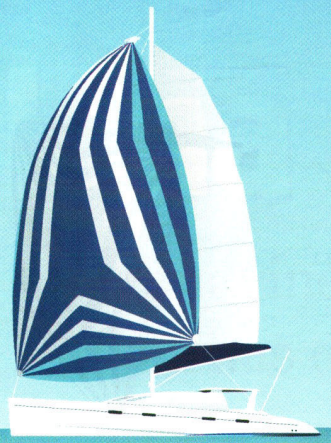


The most unusual thing I ever ate was at this restaurant in Sicily, an Italian island.

We tried to find a restaurant where local people went to eat. The first course of our meal had eight seafood dishes. One dish was about a million tiny fish packed together, breaded, and fried. I didn't love it.



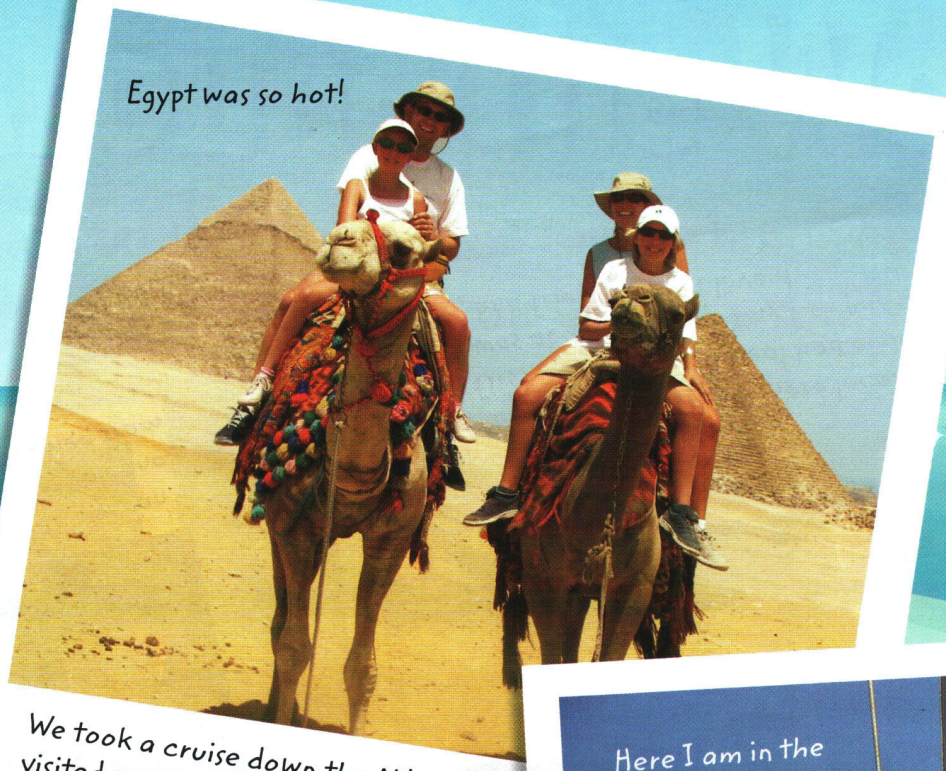
Illustrations: Stacy Peterson



For the most part, I loved being at sea. But more than anyone else in our family, I had some trouble getting used to being so close to everyone all the time. Even if I went to my cabin, it didn't really feel as if I had time apart from everyone. It's not like living ashore, where you can go out and take a walk.

I tried to spend a little time by myself every day. Still, we had a great time on the boat. My family and I played card games, played on the computer, listened to music, and just hung out when we were sailing to our next destination. When we crossed the Atlantic, it took three weeks, so we got good at keeping ourselves busy.

Bradley and I did home-schooling on the boat for a year. It was O.K., but I'd much rather learn in a classroom with a teacher and lots of other students. It was cool to visit places that are pictured in history books, and we saw lots, from ancient Greek ruins to the pyramids in Egypt. I met a lot of interesting people and saw some amazing things.

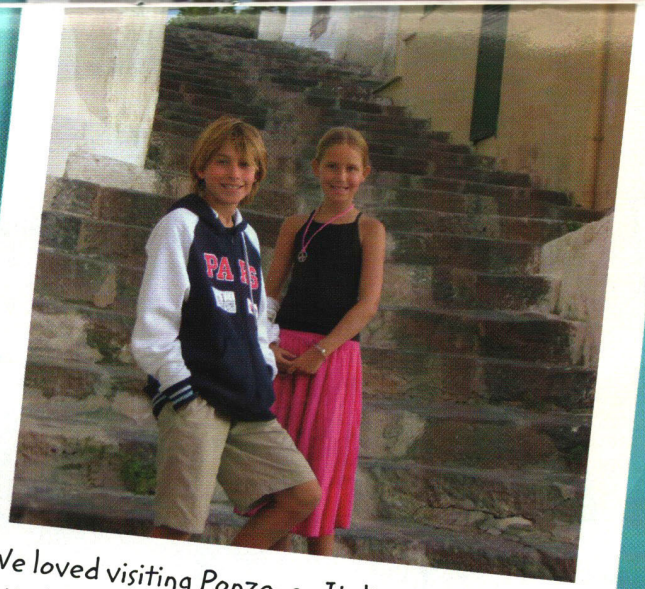


We took a cruise down the Nile, visited pyramids, and rode camels. Camels sit down and get up awkwardly, and if you don't hold on, you'll slide right off into the sand.

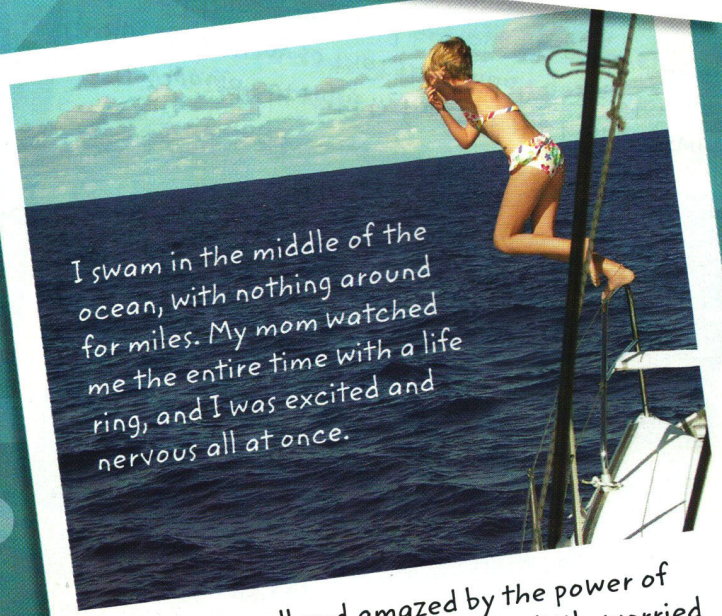


A bosun's chair is a tiny seat used to raise a person up the mast if something needs fixing. I got strapped in and hoisted up just for fun.



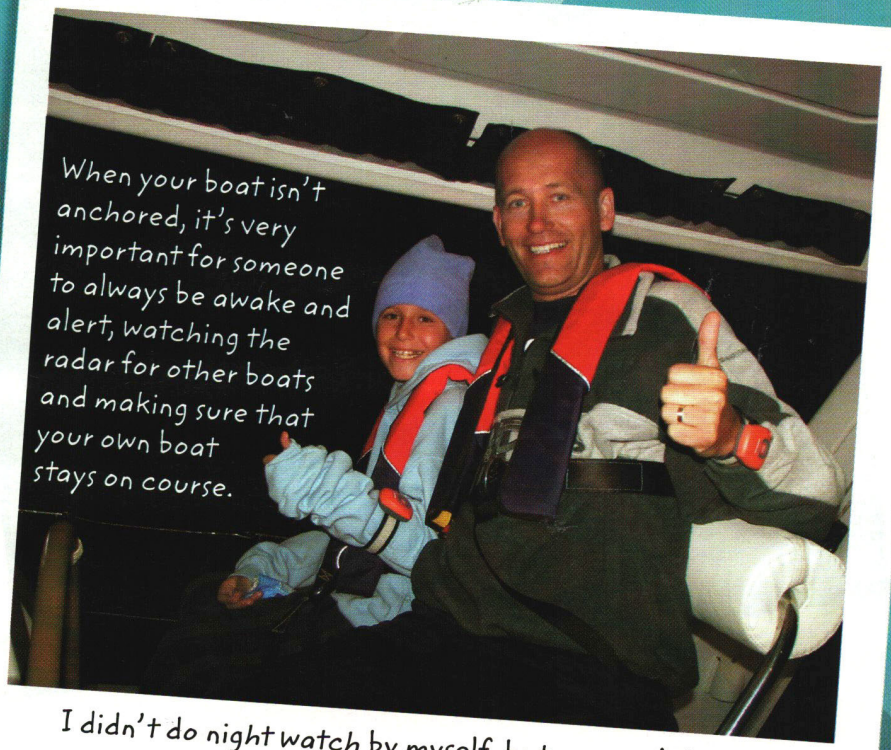


We loved visiting Ponza, an Italian island dotted with beautiful whitewashed buildings. In about every third doorway, we saw a cat sleeping.



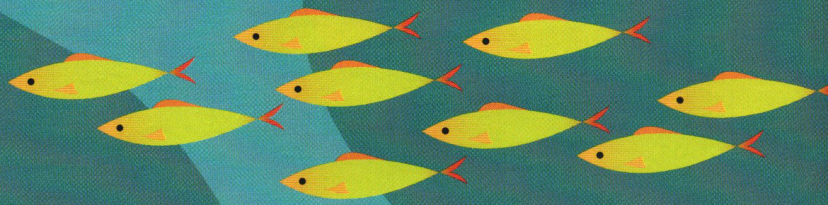
I swam in the middle of the ocean, with nothing around for miles. My mom watched me the entire time with a life ring, and I was excited and nervous all at once.

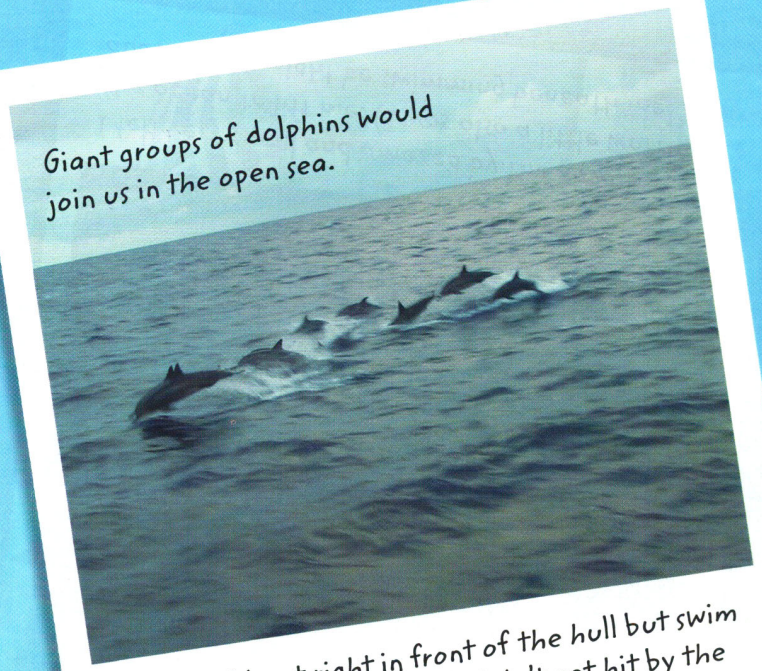
I felt very small and amazed by the power of the ocean to lift me. (I was also a little worried about what might be swimming beneath me!)



When your boat isn't anchored, it's very important for someone to always be awake and alert, watching the radar for other boats and making sure that your own boat stays on course.

I didn't do night watch by myself, but on our Atlantic crossing, I had the midnight to 3 A.M. shift. It was hard to stay awake, but I got used to it.





Giant groups of dolphins would join us in the open sea.

They would cut right in front of the hull but swim out of the way so that they didn't get hit by the boat. I think they liked to play in the waves—they showed up when we were sailing fast.



I loved to bake cookies in our teeny-tiny kitchen.



I rode a zip line through the rain forest in Antigua, which is an island in the Caribbean. I was so high up, and it was such a blast.



In Australia, we visited a really nice zoo where you could hold different kinds of animals. I chose a koala, of course.



When we were on a bus tour of a rain forest in Central America, capuchin monkeys ripped the sign off our bus! Our driver chased them and got our sign back. The little monkeys had very serious faces, but they were so playful.

After about a year at sea, we found out where my dad would be transferred for his job and that we would be moving to Connecticut. Unpacking all of our stuff from storage was like Christmas! Seeing everything that I'd forgotten I had was so much fun, and it was awesome to get our pets back, too.

I'm 11 now, and we've lived here for almost a year. I love my school, and I've made a lot of great friends. The move was strange for me in some ways—I hadn't spoken to a person my age in more than a year, and I felt awkward at first. But I think living on the water made me more brave and adventurous. On a boat, you have to face your fears. If you're on watch and a storm comes, you can't go below decks and hide. You have to stay out there and do your part.

Living on the boat turned out to be a good thing for my family. We spent so much time together on the water that we came back to land as a really close family—a better family, too. And I think that we'll see clear sailing ahead, no matter what our next adventure turns out to be. ★

Would You...?

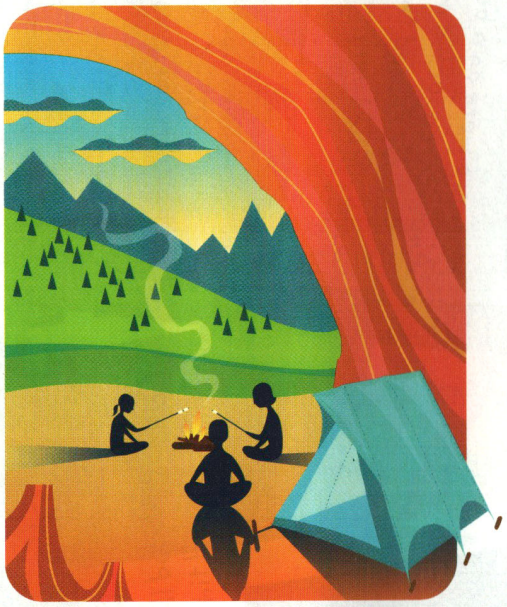
How adventurous are you? For each activity, circle whether you would rather steer clear of it, might be willing to try it, or would totally love to do it.

1. Sing karaoke in front of a big group of people

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!



2. Go for a swim in the middle of the ocean

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!



3. Camp for one night in a cave

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!

4. Take a trip on a plane by yourself

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!

5. Walk up to a famous actor, say hi, and introduce yourself

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!

6. Hold a large iguana at a zoo

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!



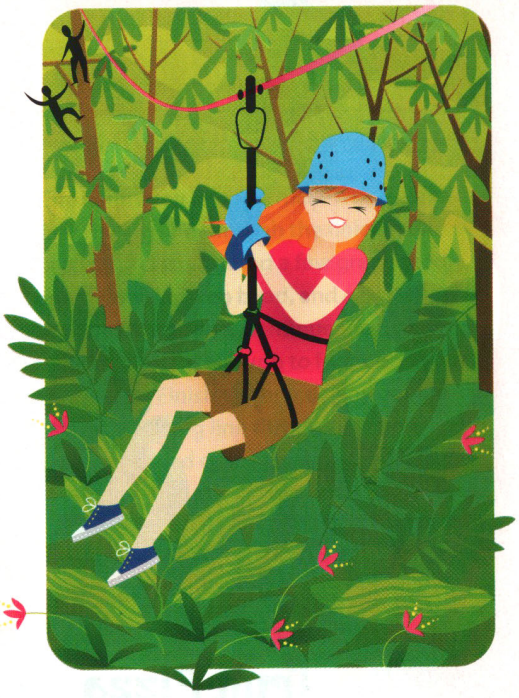


9. Raise your hand if a performer onstage asked for a volunteer from the audience

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!



10. Go for a ride on a camel

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

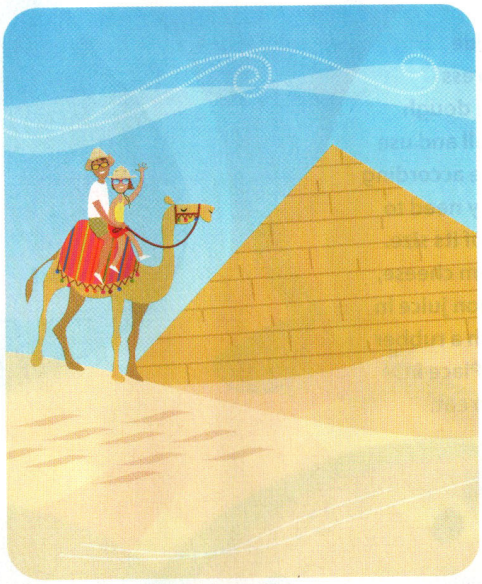
Count me in!

7. Buy something from a store clerk whose language you don't speak

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!



11. Ride on a zip line

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!

8. Spend a year living on a boat

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!

12. Try a food that you've never heard of

NO WAY.

Um, maybe.

Count me in!

Illustrations: Stacy Peterson

Adventure Meter

Mostly "NO WAY."

You're most comfortable when you go with what you know. Just make sure that you're not missing out on fun by never taking a chance on something that's new to you.

Mostly "Um, maybe."

You dare with care. You like to have fun, but you usually ask questions and think about the risks before you take the plunge and try something different.

Mostly "Count me in!"

You don't shy away when it comes to trying new things. You figure that you won't know if you'll like something until you've tried it—and you probably try lots of things! ★

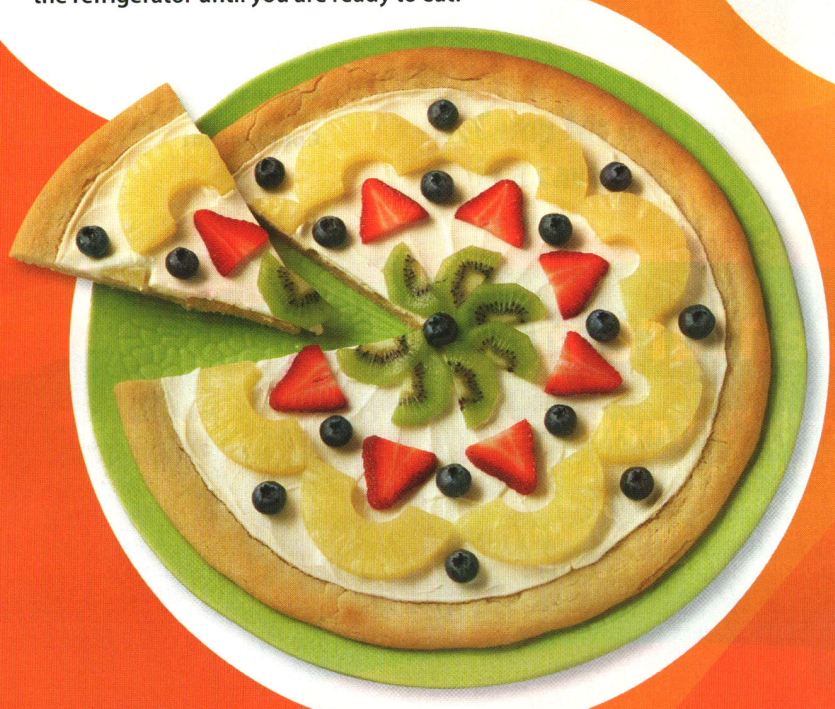
Cutie Fruity

Here are fresh ways to have fun with fruit!



Fruit Pizza

This sweet treat is made from cookie dough, cream cheese, and fruit. Press store-bought refrigerated sugar cookie dough into a pizza pan. (Tip: Roll dough into a ball and use a rolling pin to flatten.) Ask an adult to bake according to the package directions. The cookie may need to bake for 5 to 10 minutes longer because of its size. While cookie is cooling, mix 8 ounces cream cheese, 1 tablespoon sugar, and 1 tablespoon lemon juice in a bowl. Spread onto the cooled cookie with a rubber spatula. Top the pizza with sliced fruit. Place in the refrigerator until you are ready to eat.





Cherry Change Purse

You'll smile every time you grab change out of this cute pouch. Cut two circles from pink felt. Cut a thin V shape from brown felt, along with one green leaf shape. Use fabric glue to attach the cherries to a plain change purse (available at craft stores). Use black marker to draw faces on the cherries. Let dry.



Fruit Cup

Eat the cup as you snack on the filling! Ask an adult to cut the top ¼ off an apple. Set aside. Use a melon baller to core the remaining apple and scoop out a little bit of the insides, leaving the bottom and most of the sides intact. Fill the apple with a mix of peanut butter and trail mix.

Sun-Kissed Wrist

When life hands you lemons, make a bracelet! Knot clear fishing line through the hole on one end of a jewelry clasp. Thread a few green seed beads, one yellow wooden bead, and a green leaf bead onto the fishing line. Continue the pattern until the bracelet is long enough to fit around your wrist comfortably. Finish the bracelet by double-knotting the fishing line through the hole on the other end of the jewelry clasp.





Sweet Strawberries

Make a bite-sized strawberry dessert. Rinse and dry strawberries, and place them on a cookie sheet. Carefully dip and swirl each strawberry into whipped cream. Top with sprinkles. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes.

Photos: Radlund Photography Styling: Sarajane Lien

Mini Fruit Earrings

Brighten your day with these tiny pieces of fruit. Roll a small piece of nontoxic air-drying clay (found at craft stores) in your hands to warm it up and make it easier to shape. Form it into mini fruit. Let dry overnight. Use tacky glue to attach your mini fruit to hyperallergenic earring-stud blanks (found at craft stores in the jewelry aisle). Let dry.





Ripe Writing

Turn a blank card into sweet stationery. Press your thumb onto an ink pad and then onto a card. Use markers to add details and a funny saying to the card.



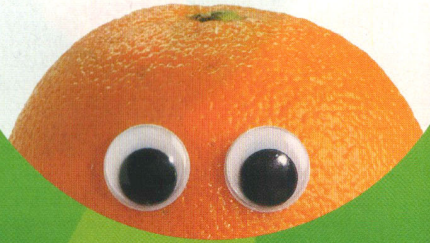
Berry Cute Buddies

Make a rainbow of fruit friends! Fill the foot of an old sock with uncooked rice. Twist a rubber band tightly around the middle of the sock to prevent the rice from spilling out. Trim off the extra material. Draw a face with a permanent black marker. Cut off the foot of another sock for a hat. Cut a stem and leaf from felt, and use fabric glue to attach them to your fruit friend. Let dry.



Fruity Bookmarks

Punch out the bookmarks in between pages 28 and 29. The little fruit faces peeking out of your book will remind you where you left off.



Fru-Shi

If you don't like sushi, give fru-shi a try! Wrap a peeled banana with fruit leather. Ask an adult to slice the banana with a sharp knife as shown. Add a pinch of sprinkles to the middle of each banana slice. Eat the fru-shi pieces with chopsticks and dip them into lime yogurt.





The wrapped banana will look like this as it is being cut.

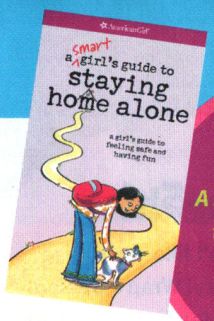
Orange Peels

There's more to these oranges than meets the eye. Ask an adult to cut 3 oranges in half (from top to bottom). Scoop out the fruit, and place the empty orange-peel halves in the cups of a muffin tin. With help from an adult, follow the directions on a box of gelatin (any flavor will do). Ask the adult to pour the gelatin mixture into the orange halves, and place them in the refrigerator for a few hours to set. When the gelatin has set, ask an adult to cut the orange halves into wedges.



The orange halves will look like this when you place them in the refrigerator. Remember—it might look like an orange, but it will taste like a lime! ★





More tips can be found in *A Smart Girl's Guide to Staying Home Alone*, available in bookstores.

Home Alone?

by Dottie Raymer

School's out, your parents are at work, and your friends are on vacation. Can you handle staying home alone? Take this quiz and find out. Then read on for tips that will help you stay safe—and have fun, too!



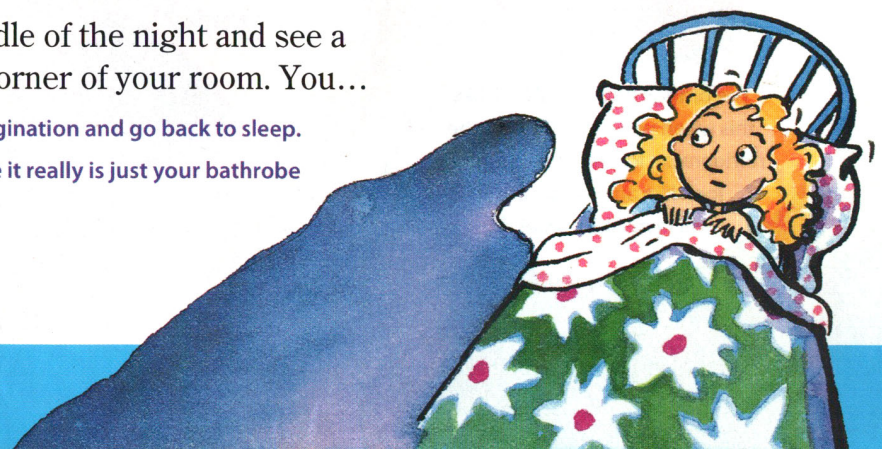


1. You and your mom are shopping for back-to-school clothes. You turn around to show your mom a shirt, and she's not there! You…

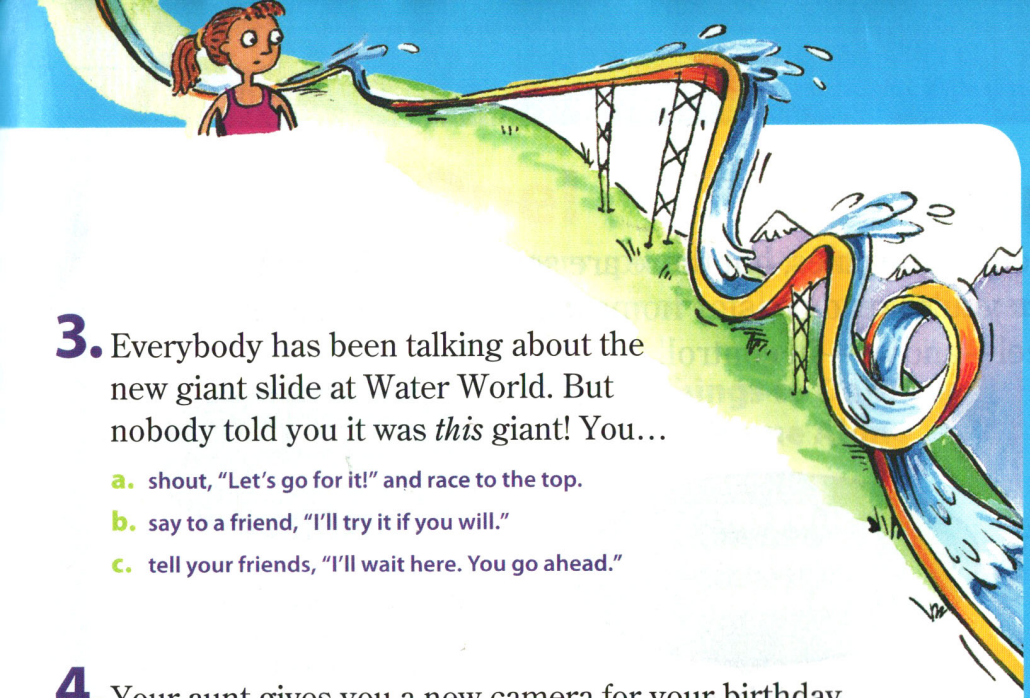
- **a.** keep shopping. She'll catch up with you sooner or later.
- **b.** stay where you are. It's where she last saw you, so it'll be the first place she'll look when she discovers you've been separated.
- **c.** run through the store shouting, "Mom! Mom! Where are you?"

2. You wake up in the middle of the night and see a strange shadow in the corner of your room. You…

- **a.** tell yourself it's just your imagination and go back to sleep.
- **b.** turn on the light to make sure it really is just your bathrobe on the back of a chair.
- **c.** call out to your parents.



Illustrations: Lauren Scheuer



3. Everybody has been talking about the new giant slide at Water World. But nobody told you it was *this* giant! You…

a. shout, "Let's go for it!" and race to the top.

b. say to a friend, "I'll try it if you will."

c. tell your friends, "I'll wait here. You go ahead."

4. Your aunt gives you a new camera for your birthday. But you need to learn how to use it before you snap any pictures. You…

a. toss aside the directions and figure out how to work it yourself.

b. dive into the directions. If you have any questions, you'll ask your mom.

c. give the directions to your mom. Once she's read them, she can teach you.

5. Your dad is 15 minutes late picking you up from soccer practice. You…

a. grab a soda out of the soda machine. At least you won't die of thirst while you wait.

b. stay at your pickup point and dig a book out of your backpack to pass the time.

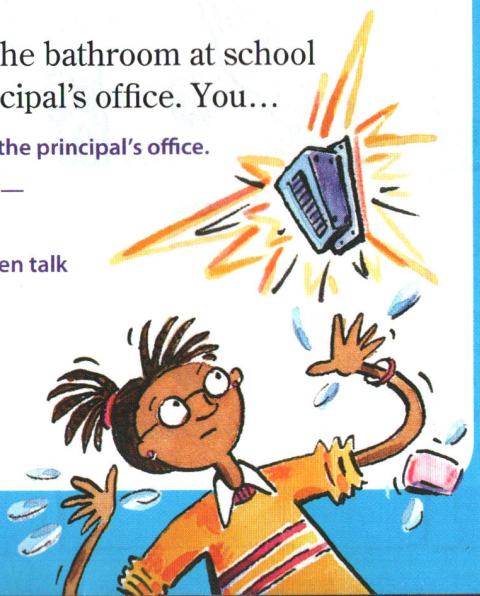
c. worry that he forgot to pick you up and ask a friend's mom for a ride.

6. You're washing your hands in the bathroom at school when you get called to the principal's office. You…

a. finish washing your hands and walk to the principal's office.

b. go to the principal's office immediately—dripping hands and all.

c. run to your classroom in a panic and then talk to your teacher.



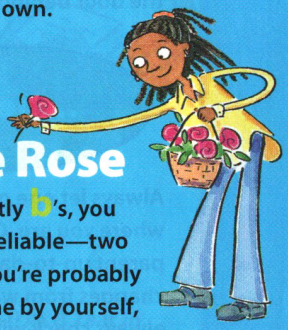
Answers

Daring Daisy



If you circled mostly **a**'s, you've probably been feeling ready to stay home alone for a while now. You're easygoing and feel sure you can handle any challenge that comes your way. But sometimes you may be too quick to respond. Slow down. Take some time to think before you act. Thinking things through will help you make good decisions on your own.

Reliable Rose



If you circled mostly **b**'s, you are capable and reliable—two great qualities! You're probably ready to stay home by yourself, but you may still be feeling a little uncertain. Perhaps you're worried that you'll have too much responsibility or that you'll get lonely or bored. Talk with your parents about what's worrying you. Together, you can figure out what you need to feel comfortable.

Panicky Petunia



If you circled mostly **c**'s, you may like the idea of staying home alone but easily get the jitters. Or you're not sure about the idea at all but may not have a choice. Try a couple of test runs first—like while your mom or dad goes on an errand or to visit a neighbor. If you still don't feel ready, tell your parents how you feel and ask them to help you find an alternative.

Golden Rules

Every family has different home rules, but there are some big rules that apply to everyone. Once you're ready to stay home alone, follow these rules carefully. You'll feel—and be—in control!

I promise to...

...always lock the door.

Believe it or not, leaving your key in the door is an easy thing to do. Make it a habit to put your key in a special spot, like a hook or dish. Always do it right after you shut the door behind you.

...check in.

Always let one of your parents know where you are. Call to keep your parent up-to-date if your schedule changes from week to week. And always check with a parent before you change your plans.

...never tell anyone I'm alone.

If someone calls for your mom, simply say, "My mom's busy right now. May I take a message?" If the caller is persistent, ignore any questions. Say, "I'll let her know you called," and hang up.

...trust my instincts.

If you're feeling uncomfortable about a situation, pay attention to that gut feeling. Your instincts help keep you alert, and if something doesn't feel right—the walk home, a neighbor, anything—call your parents. It's never silly to listen to those "funny feelings."

...never let anyone in the house.

Your best bet is to never unlock the door and never let anyone in the house. Ignoring the doorbell isn't rude if it keeps you safe.

...have a backup plan.

No matter how prepared you are, accidents happen. Whether you've lost your key, missed the bus, or forgotten your swimsuit at the pool, you need to have a backup plan when something goes wrong. Talk to your parents about what to do—and who to turn to for help—when things don't go according to plan.



Fun for One!

Being alone means no interruptions and no distractions. So if you like to do something that requires privacy or total concentration, now's your time to do it.

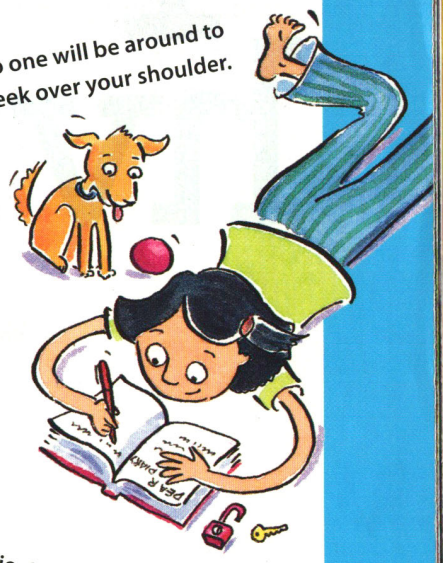
Top 10 Things to Do When You're Home Alone

10 **Anything annoying!**

Blow bubble gum. Sing loudly into your hairbrush. Practice a cheer over and over. Do whatever you love that others don't!

9 **Write secrets in your diary.**

No one will be around to peek over your shoulder.



8 **Practice an instrument or dance routine.**

Being alone means you can make all the noise you want!



7 **Become an expert.**

Pick a subject you love and learn as much as you can about it.

6 **Make a scrapbook.**

Create a space you love to be in—with your parent's permission, of course!

Create a theme, such as A Year in My Life, My Favorite Things, or My Summer Vacation. Fill your scrapbook with photos, drawings, newspaper clippings, ticket stubs—whatever tells your story.

5 **Decorate your room.**

Use this time to keep in touch with your faraway friends.

4 **Read a new novel.**

Or pick up a pen and write a novel yourself!



3 **Write a letter to a pen pal.**

Treat someone in your family to a special homemade gift. Making the gift while they're not at home will make it easy to keep it a surprise.



2 **Make a present.**

1 **Learn something new.**

Use your time alone to develop a new skill. You'll find books at your local library on everything from juggling to origami. ★

r we hvng fun yet?



by Megan McDonald

A fun summer sleepover or a weekend in the drizzly woods—Izzy thinks she knows which she'd prefer.

It was the seventh week of summer vacation, and school was a dim, distant memory. I was flopped on the floor of our dark den, lost in a pile of pillows. My thumbs were flying, texting my best friend, Rachel, about the Aloha August sleepover she'd just decided to have at her house this weekend. I had my headphones on and the music turned up loud.

"Pow! Pu! Pu! Pu!" Matt was yelling stuff at the computer. When my little brother played his favorite game, Drive Me Crazy, it drove *me* crazy. I was singing to myself to drown it out.

"Hey!" I heard Matt yell. I looked up to see Dad going from window to window, raising the blinds. "Izzy," Dad said loudly. "Headphones. Off. Now."

"Huh? What?" I asked, squinting at the sunlight.

"I'd like my cell phone back," he said, gesturing with his fingers. "Matt, off the computer."

"What's going on?" Matt asked.

"Has either of you even looked outside today?" Dad asked. "The sun is shining. Birds are singing. It's a perfect day for being outdoors. But here you are, holed up in a room dark as a cave, hunched over screens. Enough. Time to get some fresh air."

The air felt fresh enough to me, but I didn't think I should say so.

Seeing our frowns, Dad grinned and scribbled his fingers through Matt's hair. "Oh, come on, guys. We're gonna have some fun. Follow me—I have a surprise for you."

We tromped after Dad to the garage. I thought he was going to make us help him clean up out

there, but instead he started hauling sleeping bags and backpacks into the sunshine. Dad loves hiking and fishing and hanging out in the woods, but he always goes with a few of his buddies from college. They call themselves the Banana Slugs, whatever that means.

"We're going camping!" Dad announced. "The three of us. Mom has to work this weekend."

"But my sleepover's this weekend!" I protested.

"And I have…stuff," Matt muttered. We hadn't been camping before, and neither of us wanted to spend the weekend in some drippy forest.

"C'mon, guys—sleeping under the stars. Eating snacks cooked over a fire. This'll be the world's greatest sleepover!" said Dad. "I promise."

"Where are we going?" Matt asked.

"We are heading to Jacob Wimpenheimer State Park," said Dad, waving a crumpled map.

"Where?" Matt and I asked at the same time.

"It's part of a national forest. Out at the coast," Dad said. "It's only a two-hour drive."

"Cool. Maybe we'll see a mountain lion. Or a bear." Matt held up his arms and pawed at the air, zombie-style. I elbowed him.

"What? It might be cool," he said.

"What's wrong with the trees we have right here in our neighborhood?" I asked.

"It's not the same," said Dad.

"Yeah, it's not the same," Matt agreed.

I glared at him. *Thanks a lot, Matt. What a wimpenheimer.*



Illustrations: Julia Denos

Before you could say, "On top of spaghetti," we were on our way. We had driven into drizzly, overcast weather. *Yuck.* I kept trying to read a magazine, but Dad wanted us to sing camp songs. Matt was playing Slug Bug, counting VW Beetles and punching me every chance he got. I tried hard to ignore him. I picked up Dad's phone and texted Rachel.

r we hvng fun yet?

how bad is it? she replied.

carsick

dad sngng

matt punchng me

sleepover 2nite. aloha!

don't have 2 much fun w/o me

sorry 4 u. try 2 think :-)

ez 4 u 2 say

"Hey!" Dad said suddenly, eyeing me in the rearview mirror. "Put the phone away and try looking out the window, Iz. The woods are gorgeous. And besides—we're here."

I looked up as we turned in at the entrance of the park. A smashed-up car was parked nearby.

"Check it out!" said Matt.

The back door on the small blue car was hanging on its twisted hinge, and the trunk was smashed. Dad slowed so we could read the sign next to the car.

"Oh, man!" said Matt. "A *bear* did that. It looks like it took a bite out of the door."



I shivered. "Um, they have bears here?"

"Well, sure," said Dad. "Bears are nothing to sneeze at. But don't worry. We'll protect our food. We'll tie it up in a tree."

"That's just great," I whispered, but I think Dad heard me anyway.

Dad's phone was still in my pocket. I took it out and texted Rachel.

Bears 4 real!!

Dad busted me and made me hand over the cell. "Izzy, the phone is for safety. We have to save the battery in case of an emergency. Remember, we came here to get away from all this."

Reluctantly, I turned the phone over to Dad, but I couldn't help noticing as he hid it in the inside zipper pocket of his backpack.



We picked a campsite in a grove of tall trees. Colorful tents were pitched all around us. As soon as we were done setting up our tent, Dad said, "What do you say we take a picnic and go for a hike in the forest? There's a trail to Morning Glory Falls."

"A waterfall? Whoa," Matt said. "And maybe a bear will smell our food and come find us."

"The chances of seeing a bear are like...getting hit by lightning. Right, Dad?" I asked, feeling that shiver again.

But Dad was too busy turning his map this way and that. He pointed down the left-hand path, and we hiked into the foggy forest. Everything was dripping wet. The trail was muddy, and creepy moss hung down like clumps of wet hair. Yikes. Matt, however, was tipping his head back and saying, "Awesome!" about every five seconds, as if he'd never seen a tree before.

"One of the world's tallest trees is in this park," Dad told us. "And maybe we'll see some cool wildflowers. Like trillium. Or Indian paintbrush."

"Does a mushroom count?" Matt asked, pointing to an icky orange growth on a tree.

"Ew," I said.

We walked for what felt like a long time. "I'm cold," I said. "My socks are wet. When do we get to these falls, anyway?"

A bright yellow leaf caught my eye. "Matt! Something under that leaf just moved."

"Hey, maybe it's a lizard."

"AAAH!" I screamed, and we both jumped back. "It moved!"

Dad came running back. "What's wrong?"

I pointed to the disgusting yellow blob on the forest floor. "That sick, slimy thing."

"Well, whaddaya know," said Dad, smiling. "It's a banana slug."

"Gross!" I squealed.

"Gross," Matt echoed. But he bent down to look closer. "Weird. You can't tell its head from its tail."

Dad laughed. "Well, the good news is, where there are banana slugs, snakes and salamanders can't be far behind. They like to roll these guys in dirt and eat them."

"They really must be starving," I muttered.

"Speaking of starving," said Dad, "how about that picnic? I've got apples and cheese."

After lunch, we started walking again. I was starting to get kind of excited to see this waterfall. I had a poster in my room with a pretty tropical waterfall on it—maybe this one would look like that.

But when we finally arrived, the so-called waterfall was nothing more than a trickle. A dribble. A drip, spilling down over slick green rocks.

"Dad, you dragged us all the way up here for this? Morning Glory *Falls*? The leak in our shower has more running water than this," I grumbled.

Dad just stared. Matt tried to save the day. "Well, maybe it'll rain and we can come back tomorrow."

"That's the spirit," said Dad, frowning at me. "C'mon, let's go closer."

When I thought it was safe, I reached into Dad's pack.

"Not me," I said. "You guys go ahead. I'm parking it right here." I sat down on a fallen log.

"Fine," said Dad. "We won't be long. Don't wander off the path."

"Yeah, or a bear'll have you for a picnic."

"Ha, ha, Matt. So funny."

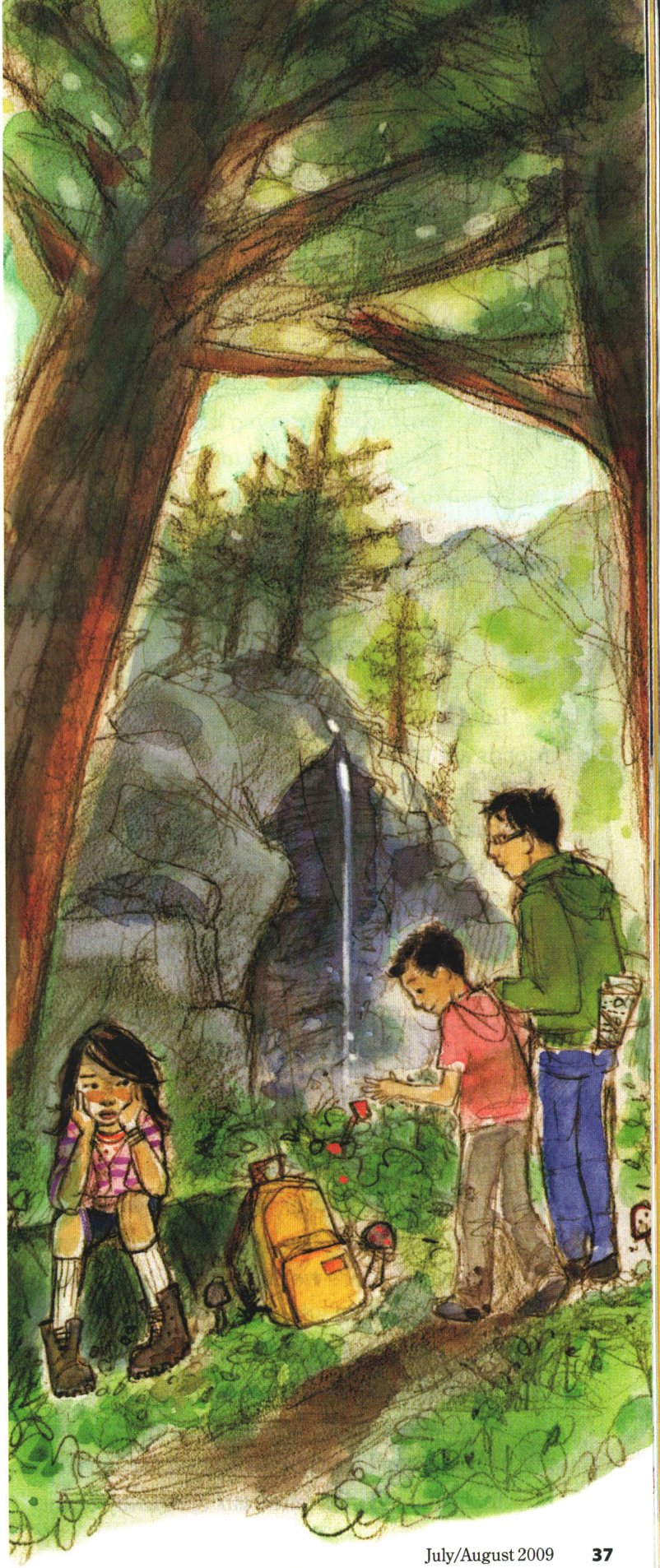
I watched Dad and Matt head down the path. When I thought it was safe, I reached into Dad's pack for the phone. Soon my thumbs were flying, and I hoped Rachel would write back right away to keep me company.

HELP lost in land of banana slugs.

cold, wet, feet fallng off.

slime u later, izzy

I hit Send. *Searching for service. No signal.* Dumb phone. Of course it wouldn't work out here. I'd try again, as soon as we got back to camp.



Later, as Matt collected sticks and Dad built a fire, I grabbed the phone and sneaked inside the tent. While my friends were probably having pizza and tropical punch by now, I was wringing out my socks and getting ready to eat freeze-dried turkey tetrazzini from a bag.

I tried Rachel again.

lo? r u there? just have 1 sec.

dinr of terrible turkey. cryng big tears.

Just as I was about to sign my name, the tent flap opened, and Dad called cheerfully, "Dinner's ready!" Then he saw me with the phone. He took a deep breath, and he started blinking really fast.

"Dad, I'm sorry, I mean, I know you said, but—"

"I'm really disappointed in you, Izzy. I thought I made it clear about not using the phone."

"But Dad, I'm missing my sleepover. All my friends are there, and—"

"Look, Iz, I know you weren't excited about this trip, but you've acted miserable from the minute we got in the car. I don't appreciate your attitude."

"No more phone, Izzy. I mean it."

"Dad. You said there'd be wildlife, and all we saw were disgusting slugs. You said there'd be a great waterfall, but it was a drip. You said we'd sleep under the stars, but it's so foggy that we can't even see the sky. My hair's wet, and my socks are wet, and I'm freezing."

I knew I sounded whiny, but I didn't care. Dad didn't seem to care that I was unhappy.

"No more phone, Izzy. I mean it. I'm sorry you're not having a good time, but you need to figure out how to. I think if you'd take your eyes away from the screen for one second and look around a little, you won't be disappointed. I want you to try."

"I'll try," I sighed.

"Try hard. Now come warm up by the fire and have some dinner."

Terrible turkey. This wasn't going to be easy.

I woke up the next morning, stretched, and took a deep breath. *Ew, smells like wet socks.* But what else did I smell? Something sweet that reminded me of home.

When I stumbled out of the tent and sat down by the fire, Dad handed me a plate.

"Pancakes? You made pancakes out here? They look good."

Dad smiled.

Maybe it was because the sun was out, or maybe it was the pancakes. Whatever the reason, I was feeling better about camping today—and feeling bad about trying to sneak a text to Rachel.

"Dad, I'm sorry about using the phone. I really do promise to try harder to have fun. It is kind of cool that you brought us all the way out here."

"Thanks, Iz. I'm not actually trying to torture you, you know," Dad said.

"I know," I said.

Just then, Matt stumbled out of the tent, his eyes wide. "Pancakes? For real?"



We scarfed down three pancakes each. "Pancakes never tasted so good," I told Dad honestly. Of course, I hadn't eaten much of last night's turkey.

After breakfast, we hit a different trail.

"Why is this trail called Ocean View if we're in the forest?" I asked carefully.

"We're in the forest for only a short while today.



This should turn into a clearing," Dad said.

A short way down the trail, the trees ended and we walked out onto a rocky bluff. We could see blue, blue water and foamy white waves crashing against the giant rocks. I was really surprised—it was so pretty.

"Amazing," said Dad, taking in the view.

"Awesome," said Matt. The three of us stood whisper-still and silent, gazing at the ocean. It was only minutes, but it felt like a long time before any of us moved.

Matt pointed to a set of steep steps down to a sandy beach. "Race you to the water!"

"Last one there's a banana slug!" I yelled after my brother. We ran along the water's edge, playing tag with the waves. After a few minutes, we collapsed onto the beach, panting.

"Where's Dad?" Matt asked. I shielded my eyes, searching up and down the beach.

"There he is," I pointed. Dad was peering into a puddle where the beach met craggy boulders.

"Hey, what'd you find?" Matt asked as we reached Dad.

"You won't believe how many little critters are scurrying around these tide pools," Dad said.

"Where?" asked Matt. "All I see is seaweed."

"Wait! One of those shells just moved," I said. "Matt, check it out. The shells are hermit crabs!"

"Cool!" said Matt.

Matt and I scrambled across the rocks, looking into every pool we could find. Something purple caught my eye. "Over here. A starfish!" A perfect five-pointed sea star clung to the base of the rock in front of me.

"There's another one!" yelled Matt. "But this one's red."

Everywhere we looked, the beach offered treasures for us to find. Matt collected crab claws and a pocketful of smooth, shiny pebbles. I had found a shell with a rainbow-colored inside and one perfect sand dollar.

Dad was saying that we should head back

to camp when I noticed something floating a little way out in the water.

"Quick, Dad—let me see the binoculars," I said.

Just then I heard a bark and spotted a pair of eyes and tiny whiskers through the lenses.

"Dad! I think it's a seal!"

"It's a baby sea lion," said Dad, pointing so that Matt could see, too.

I scanned the water and focused on a huge gray rock. What I thought were bumps on the rock actually was a colony of sleeping, sunning sea lions.

As we walked closer, we saw the baby sea lion frantically trying to pull itself onto the rock. The water was so choppy and the rock so slippery that every time the poor thing tried to climb up, it would fall back down.

"Where's its mother? Why aren't any of the others helping it?" I cried.

"C'mon, little sea lion. You can do it," Matt said. He clapped his hands and barked a sea lion imitation, and I cooed encouragement.

We watched the cute little pup for a long time. It swam to different parts of the rock and would pull itself up, only to fall back in when a big wave slapped it off the rock and tumbled it back into the whirling sea.

"Hey! Where is it?" I asked suddenly. "It didn't come up that time."

We were worried. But finally, a nose popped up out of the water. A big wave lifted the pup onto the rock ledge, and it planted its flippers. Then, before another wave could smack it off, the pup squirmed its way up onto the rock, plopping itself down amid the other sea lions.

By now, a small crowd of onlookers had clustered around us, watching the drama. We all cheered when the pup finally joined its family.

I looked up at Dad. "*That* was awesome," I said.

We made mac and cheese over the campfire that night. After dinner, we sat around singing camp songs. Dad kept singing in loud, ridiculous voices, and Matt and I were laughing so hard that we could hardly breathe, let alone sing along. Then Dad brought out the stuff to make s'mores. We roasted the marshmallows on twigs and licked our gooey fingers.

"Mmm. This is way good. There should be more foods cooked on sticks," said Matt.

I nodded happily, my mouth full.

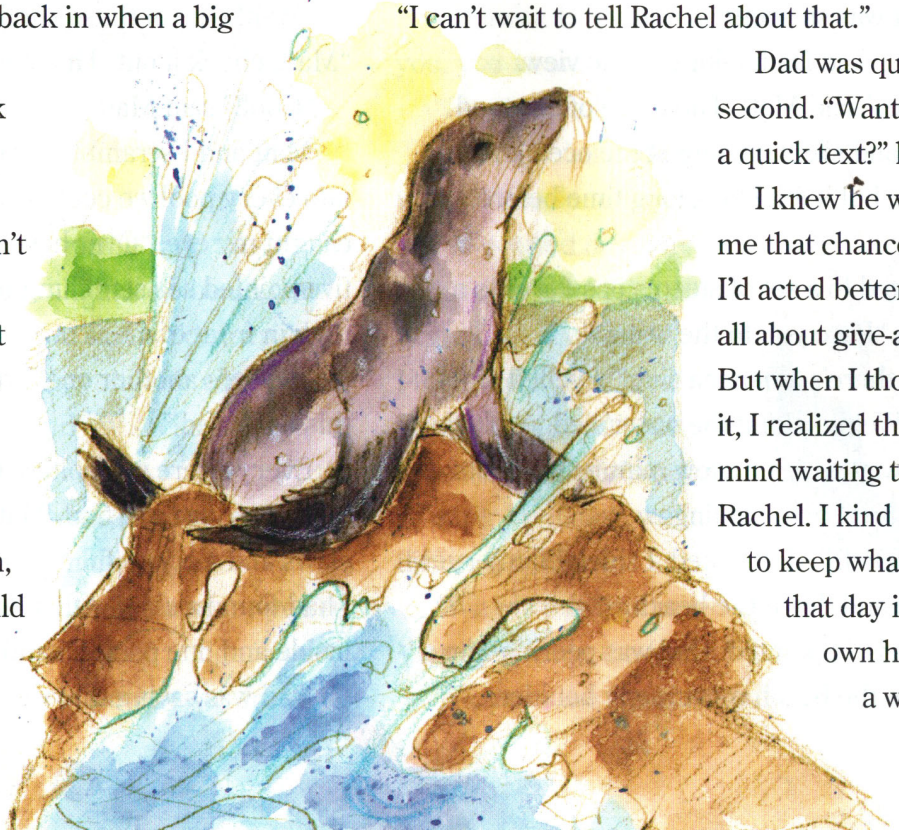
"Good day, everybody?" Dad asked.

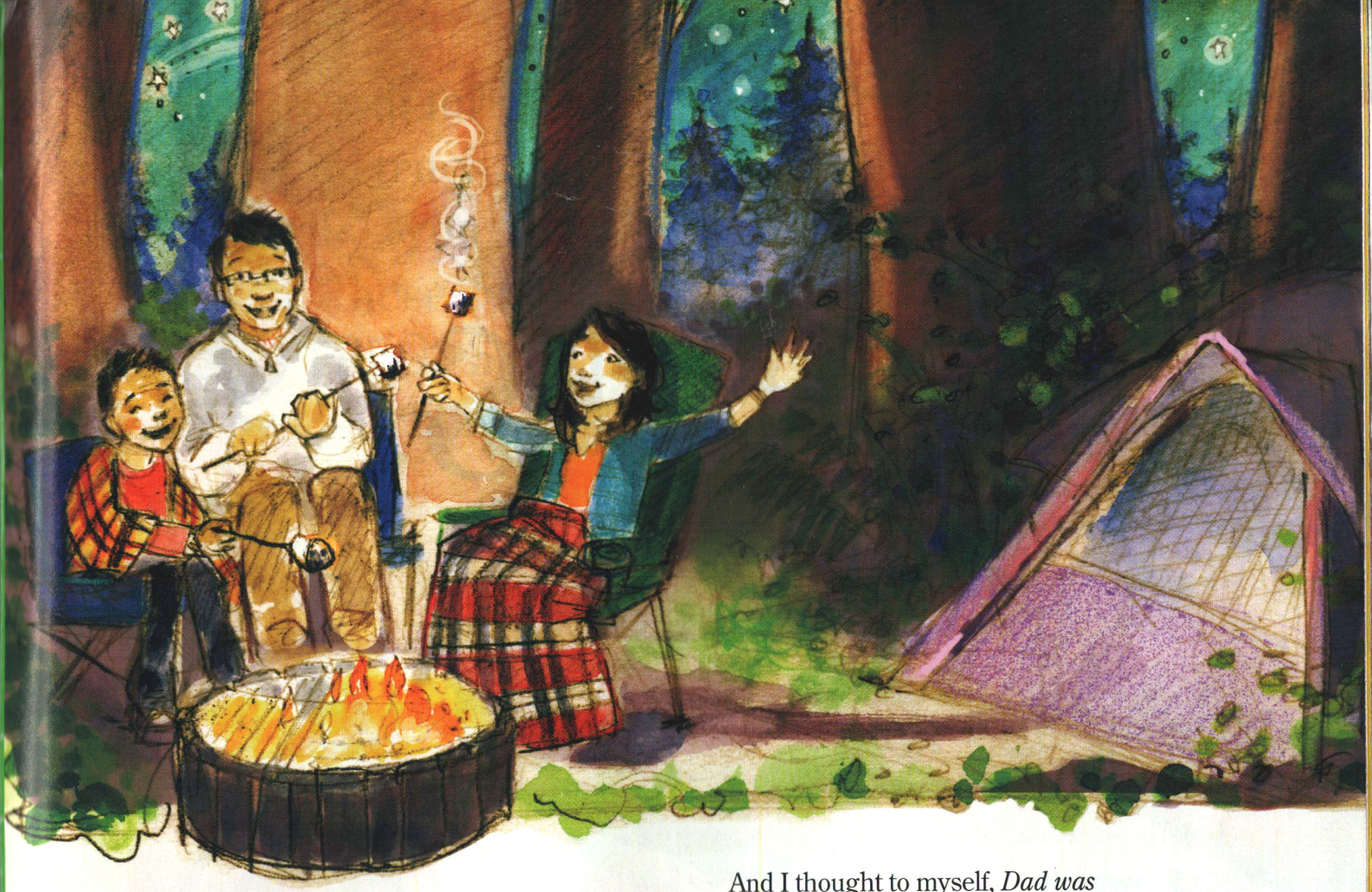
"Yep," Matt sighed.

"The baby sea lion was amazing," I said, sighing. "I can't wait to tell Rachel about that."

Dad was quiet for a second. "Want to send her a quick text?" he asked.

I knew he was giving me that chance because I'd acted better. Dad was all about give-and-take. But when I thought about it, I realized that I didn't mind waiting to tell Rachel. I kind of wanted to keep what I'd seen that day inside my own head for a while.





"No, thanks," I said thoughtfully. "I can't really describe it in a text."

"All right, Iz," Dad said.

I leaned back away from the campfire. My feet were toasty warm tonight, and I could still smell the salty sea air in my clothes. I looked up at the sky and then sat back up with a jolt.

"Dad, look! The stars are out."

"Hey, I see the Big Dipper!" said Matt.

"Wow. How come we don't see stars like this at home?" I asked.

"Too much light," said Dad. "From all the houses and streetlights."

I stared at the stars. The sky was like a giant screen broadcasting an explosion of stars, which twinkled like diamonds. Wind whispered in the redwood branches. Frogs bellyached. Far away, an owl screeched *hoo-hoo-hoooo.*

And I thought to myself, *Dad was right. This really is the best sleepover ever.*

Then I saw it. "A shooting star!" I yelped, pointing, daring to disturb the quiet. Dad and Matt looked up just in time to see the tiny spark streak across the sky, the perfect end to a perfect day. ★



Meet the Author



About age 10 Now

Megan McDonald

While camping one time in northern Minnesota with my family, I was convinced that I heard a bear outside the tent. It turned out that the noise I heard wasn't made by a bear—but it *was* made by a moose!

FROSTY BITES



Snowballs

Try this chocolate and chewy delight! Ask an adult to carefully slide a bamboo skewer through 3 marshmallows. Place skewer on a cookie sheet and freeze for one hour. Drizzle tops of marshmallows with chocolate Magic Shell topping. Add sprinkles and let topping harden.



Polar Pops

Make this snack in a snap. Cut a strawberry shortcake roll or other snack cake into three equal pieces. Ask an adult to gently poke a bamboo skewer through pieces. Freeze on a cookie sheet for two hours.

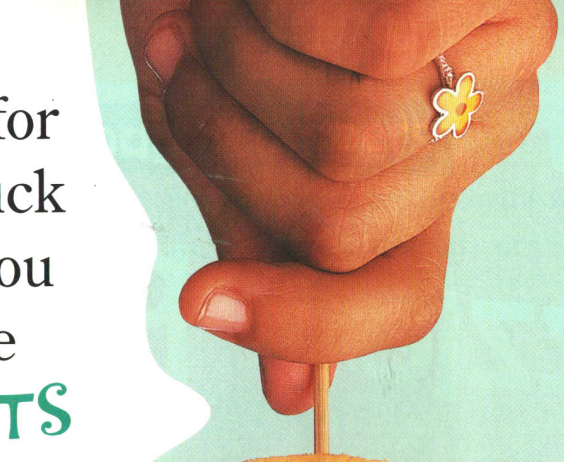


Flurry Float

It's an ice cream float—on a stick! Scoop vanilla ice cream into a 3-ounce plastic cup, filling cup about ⅓ full. Press ice cream firmly into bottom. Insert a food-safe stick into ice cream. Slowly pour grape juice into cup until it is almost full. Cover top of cup with foil, poking end of stick through foil. Freeze overnight, then remove cup.

Photos: Mike Walker Styling: Bonnie Rabert, Gail Rogoznica-McKernin

No need to wait for the ice cream truck this summer—you can make these **FROZEN TREATS** in your own kitchen!



Fruity Freeze

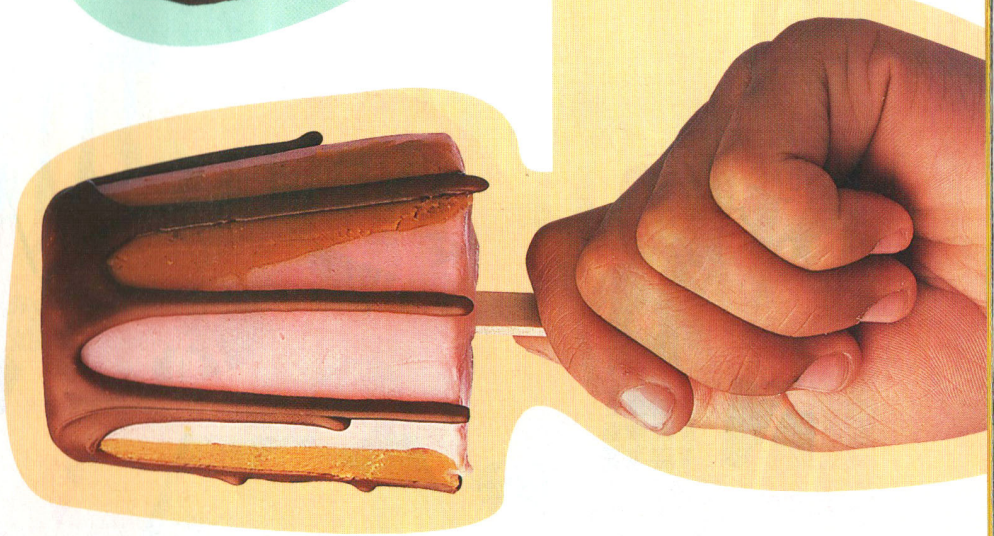
Try a tropical treat. Place a strawberry in the center of a thick pineapple slice. Ask an adult to carefully insert a bamboo skewer through the pineapple and strawberry. Place pineapple pop flat on a cookie sheet. Freeze for two hours. Drizzle with chocolate Magic Shell topping and let harden.



Peanut Brrrr

Try a cool combo. Spread 3 thick stripes of peanut butter up the inside of a 3-ounce plastic cup. Fill cup with strawberry yogurt. Insert a food-safe stick. Cover top of cup with foil, poking end of stick through foil. Freeze overnight, then remove cup. Drizzle with chocolate Magic Shell topping and let harden.





Chilly Vanilly

This bar is made with real berries. Place a few raspberries and blueberries at the bottoms of two 3-ounce plastic cups. Set aside. Scoop 1 refrigerated snack cup of ready-made vanilla pudding into a small bowl. Stir in ½ cup berries. Add 2 tablespoons whipped cream and stir. Carefully scoop mixture into plastic cups, covering berries on bottom. Insert a food-safe stick into each cup. Freeze overnight, then remove cup.

Tip:

To remove a frozen pop from a cup, run warm water over the outside of the cup for a second or two. Pull the cup off slowly, and enjoy your pop! ★

Puzzle Palooza

Shell Collecting

Jessica and Natalie are at the beach looking for shells. There are lots of possible paths they can take to get around the tourists. Follow the dotted lines. Collect points for each shell that they pass, and subtract a point for each crab in their path. Find the route that will take them to the finish and earn the largest number of points. You can go forward, up, and down, but not backward.

= -1 point = 2 points = 3 points = 4 points



Illustrations: Karen Wolcott

Sandy Stumpers

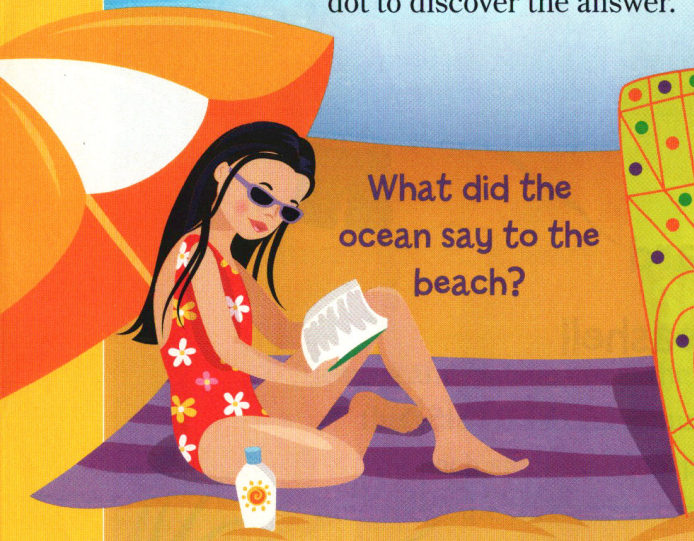
The answers to the seven clues below are hidden in the words at the end of each line. We've done the first one for you.

1. This is how you'll feel when you go into water. ___ ___ ___ towel — w e t
2. This is another word for "ocean." ___ ___ ___ — waves
3. This is something that you might do in the sand. ___ ___ ___ — lifeguard
4. This type of mammal lives in the ocean and on land. ___ ___ ___ ___ — seashell
5. This is something you wear at the beach to keep the sun out of your eyes. ___ ___ ___ — starfish
6. This piece of land might be in the middle of the ocean. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — sandpail
7. This is the color of the ocean. ___ ___ ___ ___ — umbrella



What's in the Beach Bag?

The answer to this joke is in the beach bag. Fill in the shapes that contain a **pink** or a **blue** dot to discover the answer.



What did the ocean say to the beach?

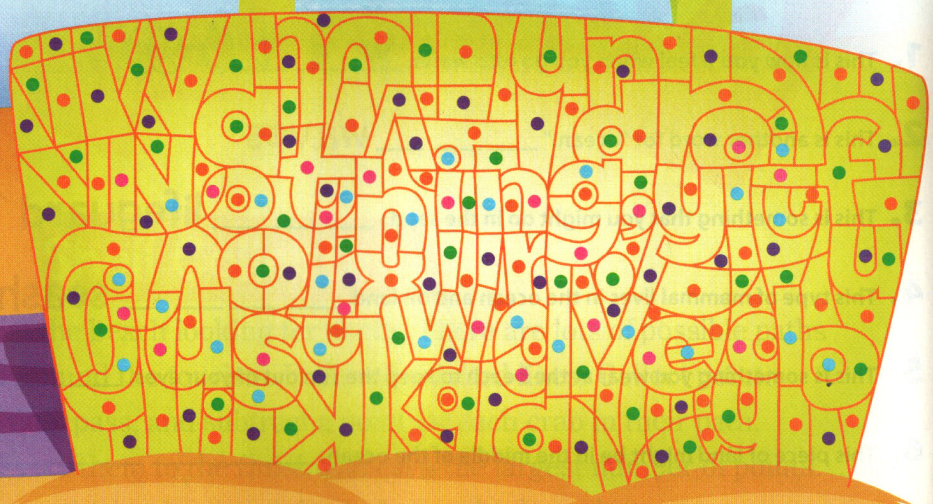


Photo Fun

Phoebe, her little cousin Gaelen, and her friend Tianna are having fun in the water. But a crab has cut out pieces from the scene! Can you match each missing piece with the place it should go in the picture?



A. B. C. D. E.





1.___ 2.___ 3.___ 4.___ 5.___

Name That Shell

The name of a seashell often hints at what the shell itself looks like. Look at these pictures of seashells and the names to the right. Guess each shell's name, and draw a line from the name to its shell.



candy snail

crown conch

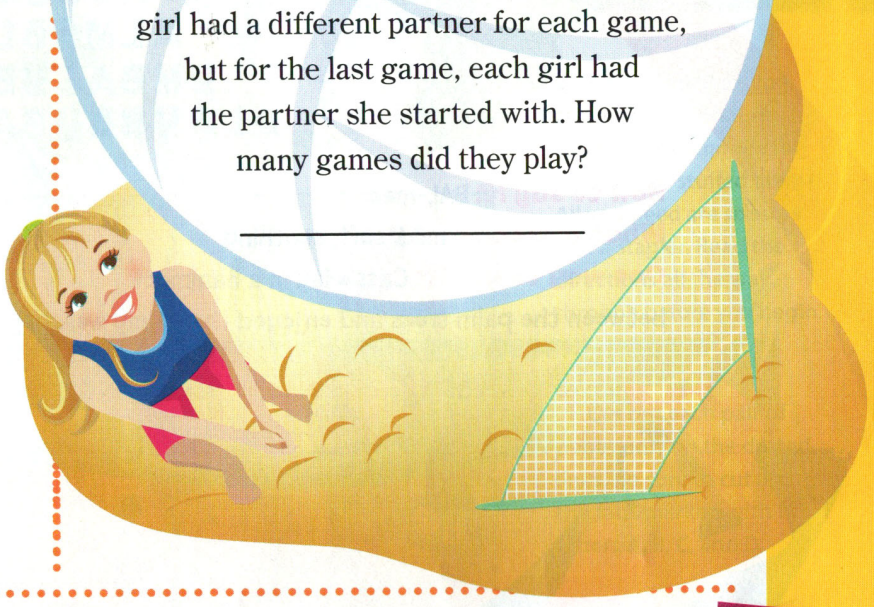
slipper shell

worm shell

angel wing

Volleyball for All

Caroline, Naomi, Hannah, and Olivia were playing beach volleyball. They played in pairs, rotating partners every game. Each girl had a different partner for each game, but for the last game, each girl had the partner she started with. How many games did they play?



Sunny Days

Use the clues to fill in the blanks, and find the phrase spelled out in the boxes.

1. You do this in a pool or the ocean.
2. You use _____ gear to dive under water.
3. It's a cold, refreshing drink for a hot day.
4. _____ *Girl*; this magazine.
5. This shoreline place may have sand and shells.
6. We celebrate our independence on July _____.
7. When you are on a raft, you do this on the water.
8. It's bright and in the sky.
9. It's squishy and it's used to clean cars.

1. ___ ___ ___ ___
2. ___ ___ ___ ___
3. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
4. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
5. ___ ___ ___ ___
6. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
7. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
8. ___ ___
9. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___





This idea was submitted by this issue's Puzzle Pal.

Erin S.

Age 14, North Carolina

Want to be an **AG Puzzle Pal?** Send original puzzles, secret codes, or brainteasers to the address on **page 7.**

This issue's Buzzword is...balmy

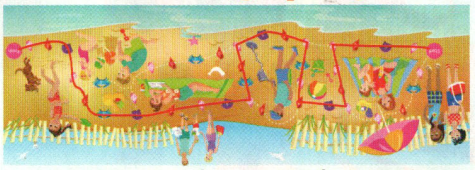
This palm tree contains the word "balmy" six times. Look forward, backward, up, down, and diagonally to find the words.

ALMBL BLYLBAY
LYBALMLY BALBALYBML
LBALAYBLMLYABYLYA
YMALAYMALYMBAMYL
BMBABBMAMBALBMBALMBL
BALAMYAYBAMYMLABYAYBA
AYBYBALAYBLYLBAYAYBALMAY
ALMABLYMLMYAMAYBALAYBALAM
YMBALYBAYABMBLYMALMAB
ALAYBAYBALMAYLAYABABL
MALMA AAYL
BBALM LLMY
LAYM AMYAL
ALM AYMLY
MY YLMYAM
ALYMB
LBALM
LMYA
ALMY
ABM
MAB
YML
ALM
MYA

How to say it: BAL-mee
What it means: mild, soft, soothing
One way to use it: Cassie lay in a hammock between the palm trees and enjoyed the balmy weather.



Shell Collecting



The correct path adds up to 67 shells.

Sandy Stumpers

1. wet; 2. sea; 3. dig; 4. seal; 5. hat; 6. island; 7. blue

What's in the Beach Bag?

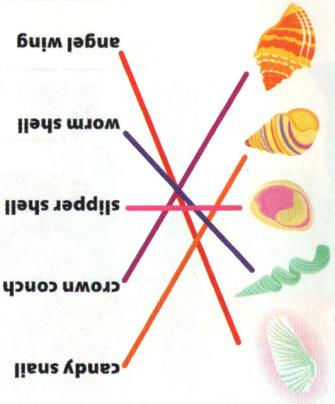


Answer Box

Photo Fun

B; E; A; C; D

Name That Shell



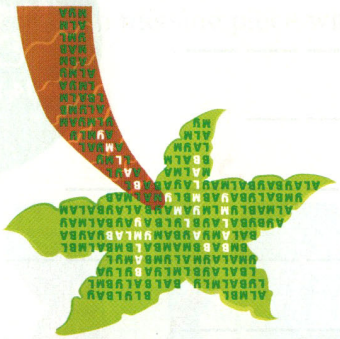
Volleyball for All

4 games

Sunny Days

1. swim, 2. scuba, 3. lemonade, 4. American, 5. beach, 6. fourth, 7. float, 8. sun, 9. sponge
Final answer: SUMMER FUN

Buzzword



Illustrations: Susan McAliley

Cooking

FROSTY BITES

Snowballs
Try this chocolate and chewy delight! Ask an adult to carefully slide a bamboo skewer through 3 marshmallows. Place skewer on a cookie sheet and freeze for one hour. Drizzle tops of marshmallows with chocolate Magic Shell topping. Add sprinkles and let topping harden.

Flurry Float
It's an ice cream float—on a stick! Scoop vanilla ice cream into a 3-ounce plastic cup, filling cup about ½ full. Press ice cream firmly into bottom. Insert a food-safe stick into ice cream. Slowly pour grape juice into cup until it is almost full. Cover top of cup with foil, poking end of stick through foil. Freeze overnight, then remove cup.

Polar Pops
Make this snack in a snap. Cut a strawberry shortcake roll or other snack cake into three equal pieces. Ask an adult to gently poke a bamboo skewer through pieces. Freeze on a cookie sheet for two hours.

Photo: Alloy Maker. Styling: Jenna Peters. Set Preparation: Ali Bryson

Sun-Kissed Wrist
When life hands you lemons, make a bracelet! Knot clear fishing line through the hole on one end of a jewelry clasp. Thread a few green seed beads, one yellow wooden bead, and a green leaf bead onto the fishing line. Continue the pattern until the bracelet is long enough to fit around your wrist comfortably. Finish the bracelet by double-knotting the fishing line through the hole on the other end of the jewelry clasp.

Fruit Cup
Eat the cup as you snack on the filling! Ask an adult to cut the top ¼ off an apple. Set aside. Use a melon baller to core the remaining apple and scoop out a little bit of the insides, leaving the bottom and most of the sides intact. Fill the apple with a mix of peanut butter and trail mix.

Sweet Strawberries
Make a bite-sized strawberry dessert. Rinse and dry strawberries, and place them on a cookie sheet. Carefully dip and swirl each strawberry into whipped cream. Top with sprinkles. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes.

A

Puzzle Palooza

Shell Collecting

Jessica and Natalie are at the beach looking for shells. There are lots of possible paths they can take to get around the tourists. Follow the dotted lines. Collect points for each shell that they pass, and subtract a point for each crab in their path. Find the route that will take them to the finish and earn the largest number of points. You can go forward, up, and down, but not backward.

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Start

B

HELP!

Dear American Girl,
I'm going on a group camping trip. I can't fall asleep without my old baby blankets, but I'm worried the other girls will make fun of me if I bring the blankets along. What do I do?
Camping Baby

Bring the blankets. They're a lot like the stuffed animals that other girls will bring. If you keep the blankets hidden in your sleeping bag, chances are that no one will ever see them. But if someone decides to tease you, just shrug and say confidently, "What's the big deal?"

Dear American Girl,
My room is SO messy. My dad always yells at me to pick it up. That drives me nuts, because I don't want to clean, but I don't want to be in trouble, either.
Messy

Make a list of the spots in your room that need cleaning, and write down a 10-minute break, too. Cut apart the list and put the slips into a bag. Play some music, pick a slip, and clean the area listed. Move to the next slip, taking the break when you draw it. A cleaned room is easier to keep clean, so maybe it won't be so hard next time.

Dear American Girl,
I'm invited to a bat mitzvah, which is a big celebration in my friend's Jewish faith. But I don't know what it's going to be like, what to do, or what to wear.
excited!

This is a special, important day for your friend. You'll need to dress nicely—no short skirts, flip-flops, or tank tops. During the religious service, be respectful, quiet, and patient. Part of the service will be said in Hebrew, and it could last more than 90 minutes. A fun party will follow the service, and you should bring a gift. Have fun!

Dear American Girl,
My brother and I argue all the time, and our fights seem to last forever because I have no idea how to stop them. What can I do to calm things down?
Tired of Fighting

Next time you feel a fight coming on, stop. Say to yourself, *Nope, I am not fighting with him.* Then think about a better way to solve the problem, whether it's asking your brother to compromise or simply walking away. Your actions might not calm him down, but one thing is certain: If you don't fight with him, he can't fight with you.

C

Easy Being Green
Tierney T., Age 13, Texas

Beachy Keen
Christina P., Age 11, Wisconsin

Queen Bee
Carly D., Age 11, Maryland

Reel Cute
Morgan T., Age 13, Indiana

Pretty Patches
Jenna W., Age 12, South Dakota

Under the Sea
Kira L., Age 10, California

New Contest: Send American Girl a Valentine
Show American Girl magazine some love and send us a card for Valentine's Day! Make a valentine that we've never seen before—sew it, paint it, or decorate it with sparkles and sweet words—but please don't decorate your card with candy. Send your valentine to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, and birth date. Postmark deadline: August 10, 2009. Winners will appear in the January/February 2010 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.

Super Stories
Read the winners of our short-story contest!

Keep Your Cool
Tips for staying calm all day long

American Girl
Coming up in the October issue

Go to americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Start the fun" for more activities!

Choose Your Shoes
Try a cool craft to customize your sneakers.

Hilarious Hair!
See the the funny photos girls sent in to our Crazy Hairdo Contest.

Happy Halloween
Fun little ways to show your spooky side

SUPER Summer Issue! 4 Great Posters You'll Love

American Girl
americangirlmagazine.com

35 ways to cool off and get wet!
* Make frozen treats
* 3 quizzes you can take
* Fun fruity crafts

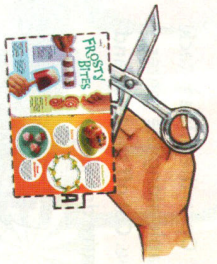
Bonus! 4 funny bookmarks inside!

D

Mini Mag

With the Mini Mag, you can make a miniature copy of *American Girl* for your doll or stuffed animal. All you need are scissors and a stapler. Read the directions all the way through before you begin.

1 Cut out each pair of pages only on the dotted lines. Be sure to cut around the tabs marked with the letters A, B, C, and D.



2 Stack the pages on top of one another in the order shown below, with the letters on the tabs facing up.



Continued

Mini Mag

3 Fold the stack of pages in half along the solid line in the center. The cover of the magazine should now be on top. Run your fingernail down the folded edge to help the pages lie flat.



4 Open the folded stack. Staple along the center line. Cut off the tabs, and you're done!













Posters Carefully cut along the dotted line to remove your posters. These photos were submitted by girls like you!

American Girl®



Illustration: Lucy Truman

American Girl®

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★

Illustrations: Laura Cornell

MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl,*

I have a best friend. She is fun, loyal, and trustworthy, but I'm feeling kind of bored with our friendship. We just don't have much to talk about. How can I make things better?

dull

Friends can drift apart over time, but since this girl is fun and loyal, your friendship is worth working on. Try inviting your friend over to play a game, watch a movie, or do another activity that would be less awkward than just sitting and talking. You'll start to build up experiences that you have in common, and that usually gives friends things to talk about.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I've read books and taken a class, and I'm ready to babysit. But I don't know any families with young children, and I don't want to put up signs with my phone number on them.

What do I do?

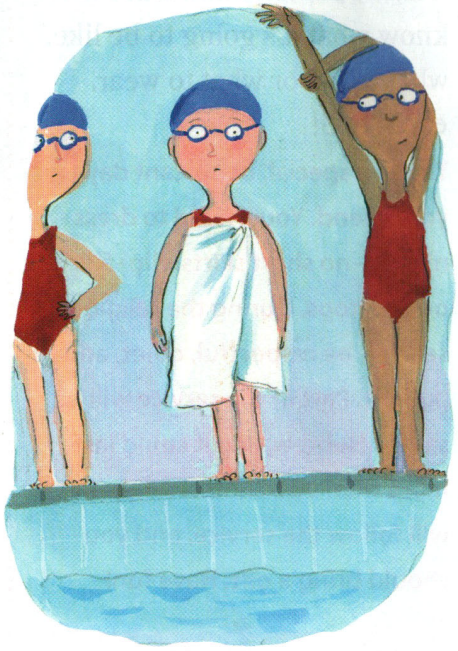
Start out by printing business cards. They should include your name, your phone number, a list of your services, and the hourly rate you'd like to charge. Give a stack of cards to each of your parents, asking them to hand out cards to their friends or trusted co-workers. Then wait for the calls. Good luck!

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My mom just told me that she signed me up for swim team. But I'm so self-conscious in a swimsuit that I won't be able to do a single stroke. Help me!

should I swim?



Don't let your fears keep you out of the pool! Ask your mom to help you find a swimsuit that makes you feel more confident. Focus on your technique and how swimming can make you feel strong and fast. Keep a cover-up nearby if you want one, and try to remember that the people at meets are there to watch you compete, not to see what kind of swimsuit you have.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

Someone on my soccer team called me a ball hog. I don't want to let my team down, so tell me what to do—try to score a lot of goals to make sure we win, or always pass the ball?

ball hog?

Before anything else, talk to your coach about your concerns. She can let you know if she thinks you need to work on skills, teamwork, or sportsmanship. It's also possible that you're doing everything just the way you should, and your coach can tell you that, too. Get her opinion before you take your teammate's words to heart.

even MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl*,

EVERYBODY has a cell phone, but my mom won't let me get one. She says I'm too young, but I'm not! I even offered to pay for the minutes myself. How can I get her to let me have one?

talks a lot

Ask your mom why she thinks you're too young for a phone, and really listen to her answer. If she says that you need to be more responsible, then ask her what you can do to show her that you are. There's a chance, though, that your mom might not change her mind until you are older. If that's the case, stay calm. Whining that everyone has a cell phone is a sure way to show your mom that you *aren't* mature enough for one.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

I am scared of dogs—even the tiniest ones! When I see a dog, I have to run away. That means I can't even go over to my friend's house, because she has a dog. Can I get over my fear?

Scaredy Dog



Don't ever run from a dog—it might chase you. Start slowly. When you want to get close to a dog, you should *always* get the owner's permission. Ask if it's O.K., then toss the dog a toy or treat, and let her come to you. Don't look the dog right in the eyes—she might feel threatened. Talk in soothing tones as you pet the dog gently under the chin, and work up to pet her neck and back. Once you're comfortable with one dog, you might begin to feel confident around other dogs, too.

★

Dear *American Girl*,

My dad is a coach and teacher. When he's home, he always plays with my three brothers. I only ever see him when he kisses me good night.

Desperate for Dad

Does your dad know how you feel? Explain how much you miss him, and ask him to find a regular time on his calendar for you each week. Maybe there are even ways to spend time with him when he's busy. Could you do your homework in his classroom after school or go with him to sports practices? Working as a team, you and your dad can figure this out.

★

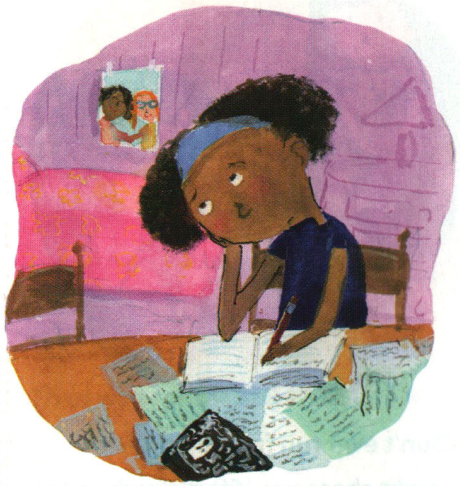
Dear *American Girl*,

When my friends are talking, I always listen. But when I try to talk, no one listens to me.

Want to be Heard

Your friends probably aren't ignoring you—they just need help noticing that you want to say something. Make it easy for them by trying something funny or unusual. Raise your hand. Or clear your throat dramatically. Or start whispering to the person next to you—that'll get attention, right? When they notice that you always add something interesting to the conversation, your friends should start to listen up more often.

still MORE HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

My grandpa is sick. I want to make him something to say "get well soon," but I'm not sure what to do. Do you have ideas?

Help!

You're already halfway there—you know what you want to say. The rest is easy. Think about what your grandpa likes to do. If he enjoys reading, make him a bookmark and write your message in fun letters. If he loves TV, make him a storage box for his remotes. You also could simply craft a card that includes your heartfelt message. Whatever you choose to do, your grandpa will get one message loud and clear—that you love him.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My friend and I decided to write a book together, but she lost interest. I can't finish the book without her. Plus, she won't even talk to me about it. Can I make her come back?

Frustrated

Probably not. It's hard to force someone to be creative and enthusiastic, and it sounds as if your friend has moved on to other interests. Try talking to her again. Tell her that you're disappointed you won't be working together but that you hope this disagreement won't hurt your friendship. Then, try writing by yourself. Make a shorter story your goal, and take your own imagination for a spin.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I live in a wealthy town, and most of my friends live in huge houses. I'm embarrassed to have them over to my small, regular house. I know I'm luckier than a lot of people these days—I just need help appreciating what I have.

NOT Fair

It's normal to feel envious sometimes and to want what others have. But you're right to realize that you really are fortunate. When you're feeling embarrassed by what you don't have, try making a list of things you wouldn't trade for anything: your loving family, your home, your talents. You'll feel thankful when you realize how much you *do* have.

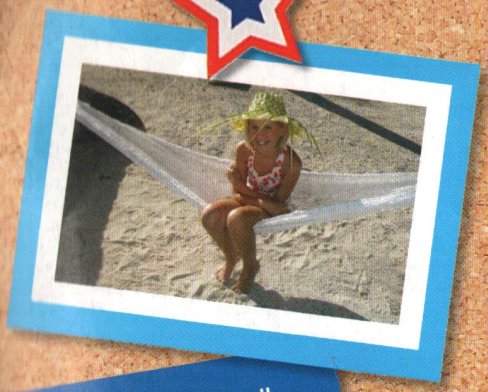
★

Advice from You

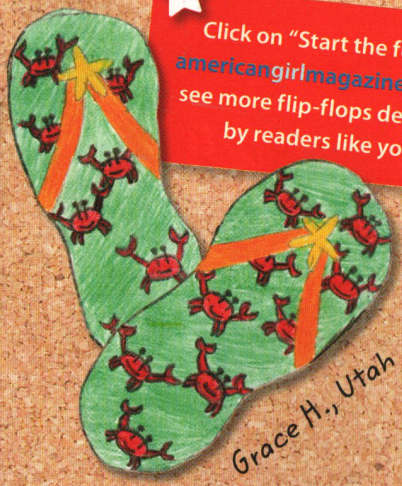
"If you want a pet but can't have one, try getting a houseplant instead. It's not the same as a pet, but you can name a plant, take care of it, and decorate its pot. Plus, it brightens your room."

Anneke K.
Age 13, Minnesota

Need advice? Got advice? Write:
Help!
***American Girl* magazine**
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Click on "Start the fun" at americangirlmagazine.com to see more flip-flops designed by readers like you.

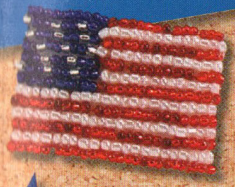


Grace H., Utah



Here is Shining Star Emily L. with her latest collection of shoes for girls in Ethiopa.

Do you remember all the places Elena visited? Go to americangirlmagazine.com and click on "Start the fun" to take a quiz!







Behind the Scenes

Flip-flops, flowers, and fun—*American Girl* loves summer.

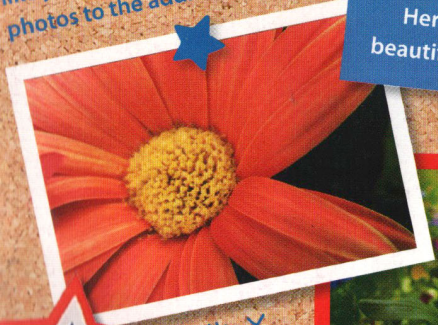


Photo: Jose Martinez

How many dolphins did you find in this issue? We counted 16!

All of the photos on the flower poster were sent in by AG readers like you! Send us copies of your best photos to the address on page 7.

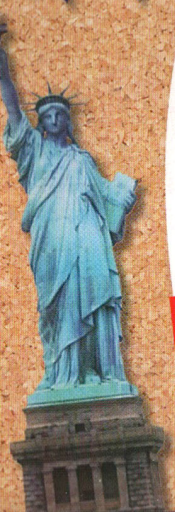
Here are two more beautiful flower photos:



Hollis Y., Louisiana



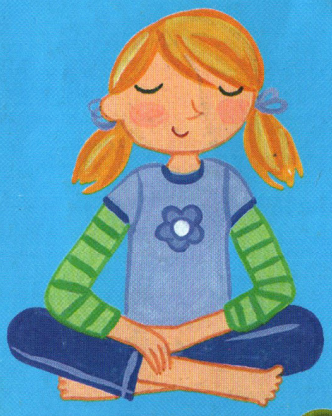
Taylor M., Illinois



Create a magazine cover at "Start the fun" at americangirlmagazine.com.

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Tips for staying calm all day long



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Coming up in the September/ October issue

Choose Your Shoes

Try a cool craft to customize your sneakers.

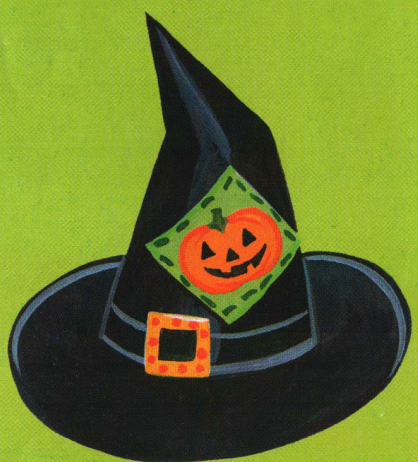
Hilarious Hair!

See the the funny photos girls sent in to our Crazy Hairdo Contest.



Happy Halloween

Fun little ways to show your spooky side



Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

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